

William Jewell College
Library

CLASS NO. DATE VOL. NO.

218-1-5

DISCARD

87

1/9.

C. I. Ringo

May 5th 1885

Presents

Rev. Wmth Thompson L.L.D.

Sold for

Jesse E. Brumet
Liberator





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

LINDSAY & BLAKISTON'S PUBLICATIONS.

of the Rev. John Cunningham's Works.

UNIFORM EDITION.

Printed by Messrs. Lindsay & Blakiston, and sent by mail free of postage, upon receipt of the enclosed by the Publishers.

CUNNINGHAM'S APOCALYPTIC SKETCHES.

OF THE CHURCHES OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.
One Volume, 8vo. 1840.

CUNNINGHAM'S APOCALYPTIC SKETCHES.

OF THE CHURCHES OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

CUNNINGHAM'S LECTURES ON THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

Apocalyptic Sketches.

CUNNINGHAM'S LECTURES ON THE PARABLES.

LECTURES ON THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA MINOR.

CUNNINGHAM'S LECTURES ON THE PARABLES.

OF THE CHURCHES OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.
One Volume, 8vo. 1840.

CUNNINGHAM'S LECTURES ON THE PARABLES.

OF THE CHURCHES OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

CUNNINGHAM'S LECTURES ON THE PARABLES.

OF THE CHURCHES OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

CUNNINGHAM'S LECTURES ON THE PARABLES.

OF THE CHURCHES OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

CUNNINGHAM'S LECTURES ON THE PARABLES.

OF THE CHURCHES OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

LINDSAY & BLAKISTON'S PUBLICATIONS.

The Rev. John Cumming's Works.

UNIFORM EDITION.

Price 75 cents per Volume, and sent by mail, free of postage, upon receipt of this amount by the Publishers.

CUMMING'S APOCALYPTIC SKETCHES;
OR, LECTURES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.
One Volume, 12mo. Cloth.

CUMMING'S APOCALYPTIC SKETCHES.
SECOND SERIES. One Volume, 12mo. Cloth.

CUMMING'S LECTURES ON THE SEVEN CHURCHES.
One Volume, 12mo. Cloth.

CUMMING'S LECTURES ON OUR LORD'S MIRACLES.
One Volume, 12mo. Cloth.

CUMMING'S LECTURES ON THE PARABLES.
One Volume. 12mo. Cloth.

CUMMING'S PROPHETIC STUDIES:
OR, LECTURES ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL.
One Volume, 12mo. Cloth.

CUMMING'S MINOR WORKS. First Series.
One Volume, 12mo. Cloth. This Volume contains the following:
THE FINGER OF GOD, CHRIST OUR PASSEOVER, THE COMFORTER.
Which are all bound and sold separately. Price 38 cents.

CUMMING'S MINOR WORKS. Second Series.
One Volume, 12mo. Cloth. This Volume contains the following:
A MESSAGE FROM GOD, THE GREAT SACRIFICE, AND CHRIST RECEIVING SINNERS.
Which are also bound and sold separately. Price 38 cents.

The Rev. John Cumming, D.D., is now the great pulpit orator of London, as Edward Irving was some twenty years since. But very different is the Doctor to that strange, wonderfully eloquent, but erratic man. There could not by possibility be a greater contrast. The one all fire, enthusiasm, and semi-madness; the other a man of chastened energy and convincing calmness. The one like a meteor, flashing across a troubled sky, and then vanishing suddenly in the darkness; the other like a silver star, shining serenely, and illuminating our pathway with its steady ray. He is looked upon as the great champion of Protestantism in its purest form.

His great work on the "Apocalypse," upon which his high reputation as a writer rests, having already reached its fifteenth edition in England, while his "Lectures on the Miracles," and those on "Daniel," have passed through six editions of 1000 copies each, and his "Lectures on the Parables" through four editions, all within a comparatively short time.

Q. D. Briggs May 1854

Apocalyptic Sketches.

LECTURES

ON THE

SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA MINOR.

BY

THE REV. JOHN CUMMING, D.D.

MINISTER OF THE SCOTCH NATIONAL CHURCH, AUTHOR OF LECTURES ON THE
MIRACLES, PARABLES, DANIEL, ETC. ETC.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

REV. iii. 22.

W. PHILADELPHIA:
LINDSAY AND BLAKISTON.

1854.

4/3/89 98

ca 1

Apocryphic & Psephic

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE COUNTESS OF DUCIE.

DEAR MADAM :

My respect for your Ladyship will plead my best apology for dedicating to you these Lectures on the Seven Churches of Asia. You permitted me to associate your name with a previous work, and I am sure I have your forgiveness for again connecting so esteemed and respected a name with this volume.

Aware of the practical character of your mind, and of your deeper sympathy with acknowledged evangelical truth and personal religion than with any interpretation, however valuable, or even with the study of unfulfilled prophecy, however obligatory, I seize the opportunity of dedicating to your Ladyship these Lectures, as a sincere, and it is hoped not unsuccessful attempt to show, that if the Apocalypse has solemn and mysterious depths which

none can sound, but which all should study, it also presents unsealed springs of living water for the refreshment and direction of all that have ears to hear. Not a few of these Lectures you heard delivered from the pulpit: I hope their interest has not escaped by their being committed to the press.

To your Ladyship and to your noble husband the schools and charities and missions of my Church are deeply indebted. I can only thus publicly thank you, and pray that on you and yours that blessing may rest which makes poor men's homes happy, and without which noble homes can never know what true happiness is.

I have the honour to be

Your Ladyship's most

Faithful and obliged Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present volume contains a practical view of the precious epistles addressed by Jesus the High Priest, who walks amid the golden candlesticks, to the Seven Churches of Asia. In these, as in all the Epistles of the New Testament, the local is made the pedestal on which shines afar the brightness of Catholic Christianity. The special Church is addressed as the representative of the whole Church. "He that hath ears to hear," appended to each epistle, is evidence of this. The Author hopes and prays that these Lectures may be even more useful in print, to such as may be pleased to read them, than they were as addressed from the pulpit to those who heard them.

CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.

	PAGE
THE SEER..... <i>Rev. i. 9-11.....</i>	13

LECTURE II.

JOHN IN PATMOS..... <i>Rev. i. 9.....</i>	29
---	----

LECTURE III.

THE EVERLASTING HIGH-PRIEST..... <i>Rev. i. 12-18.....</i>	44
--	----

LECTURE IV.

THE SEVEN STARS AND SEVEN CANDLESTICKS..... <i>Rev. i. 20.....</i>	59
--	----

LECTURE V.

THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS—HER EXCELLENCY..... <i>Rev. ii. 1-3.....</i>	77
--	----

LECTURE VI.

FIRST LOVE LOST..... <i>Rev. ii. 4.....</i>	94
---	----

LECTURE VII.

THE DIVINE PRESCRIPTION..... <i>Rev. ii. 5, 6.....</i>	111
--	-----

LECTURE VIII.

THE BATTLE OF LIFE..... <i>Rev. ii. 7.....</i>	125
--	-----

LECTURE IX.

	PAGE
THE SOLDIERS OF CHRIST.....	Rev. ii. 7..... 142

LECTURE X.

TRIALS.....	Rev. ii. 8, 9..... 163
-------------	------------------------

LECTURE XI.

CHRISTIAN COURAGE.....	Rev. ii. 10..... 176
------------------------	----------------------

LECTURE XII.

CHRISTIAN FAITHFULNESS.....	Rev. ii. 10..... 193
-----------------------------	----------------------

LECTURE XIII.

THE PROMISE.....	Rev. ii. 11..... 211
------------------	----------------------

LECTURE XIV.

THE FAITHFUL MARTYR.....	Rev. ii. 12, 13..... 228
--------------------------	--------------------------

LECTURE XV.

UNFAITHFULNESS.....	Rev. ii. 14, 15..... 243
---------------------	--------------------------

LECTURE XVI.

THE HIDDEN MANNA AND WHITE STONE.....	Rev. ii. 17..... 258
---------------------------------------	----------------------

LECTURE XVII.

CHRISTIAN GRACES.....	Rev. ii. 18, 19..... 271
-----------------------	--------------------------

LECTURE XVIII.

CONSUMPTION OF BABYLON.....	Rev. ii. 20..... 285
-----------------------------	----------------------

LECTURE XIX.

THE BLOOD OF SAINTS IN ROME.....	{ Rev. ii. 20 Rev. xviii. 24 } 306
----------------------------------	---------------------------------------

LECTURE XX.

PAGE

SPIRITUAL DEATH.....	Rev. iii. 1.....	332
----------------------	------------------	-----

LECTURE XXI.

INSTANT DUTIES.....	Rev. iii. 2.....	347
---------------------	------------------	-----

LECTURE XXII.

THE WALK IN WHITE.....	Rev. iii. 4.....	360
------------------------	------------------	-----

LECTURE XXIII.

TRUE HONOUR AND RENOWN.....	Rev. iii. 5.....	373
-----------------------------	------------------	-----

LECTURE XXIV.

THE KEY OF DAVID AND THE OPEN DOOR.....	Rev. iii. 7, 8.....	386
---	---------------------	-----

LECTURE XXV.

HOLD FAST.....	Rev. iii. 11.....	398
----------------	-------------------	-----

LECTURE XXVI.

GLORIOUS PROMISES.....	Rev. iii. 9, 10, 12, 13	409
------------------------	-------------------------	-----

LECTURE XXVII.

POWER OVER THE NATIONS AND THE MORNING STAR.....	Rev. ii. 26-29.....	423
---	---------------------	-----

LECTURE XXVIII.

ENTHUSIASM.....	Rev. iii. 14-16.....	434
-----------------	----------------------	-----

LECTURE XXIX.

DIVINE COUNSEL.....	Rev. iii. 17, 18.....	448
---------------------	-----------------------	-----

LECTURE XXX.

SOVEREIGN LOVE.....	Rev. iii. 19.....	462
---------------------	-------------------	-----

LECTURE XXXI.

DIVINE CHASTISEMENT.....	Rev. iii. 19.....	Page 471
--------------------------	-------------------	-------------

LECTURE XXXII.

THE APPEAL OF LOVE.....	Rev. iii. 20.....	485
-------------------------	-------------------	-----

LECTURE XXXIII.

COMMUNION.....	Rev. iii. 20.....	500
----------------	-------------------	-----

LECTURE XXXIV.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL.....	Rev. iii. 21.....	514
---------------------------------------	-------------------	-----

LECTURE XXXV.

THE LAST APPEAL.....	Rev. iii. 22.....	526
----------------------	-------------------	-----

LECTURES

ON

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

LECTURE I.

THE SEER.

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and what thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."—
REV. i. 9-1

IT is my intention to lay before you plain and interesting sketches of sacred duties and responsibilities, as far as these can be gathered from the addresses of our Lord to the seven Churches of Asia. These addresses have little to do with what may gratify the taste of the cultivated, or please the imagination and excite the fancy of the intellectual; but if defective in these claims to popular sympathy, they are calculated to do much good to those who seek to know their duties and to understand how they shall best fulfil them, and to be made acquainted with their responsibilities as members of the visible Church, and living amid the means and ordinances of grace. Profit is not always set in pleasure. If, therefore, you expect in my expositions of these Epistles to the seven Churches of Asia any flights or excursions calculated to gratify the curious, you will be disappointed; but if you expect and pray that I may be able to submit to you new

and fresher views of great obligations, lofty responsibilities, and to imprint upon your hearts a deeper sense of gratitude, then, I trust, you will not be disappointed—I believe that the Spirit of God will bless what I say, to your good and to his glory.

The epistles to these churches are really addressed to the Catholic or Universal Church—they are not prescriptions for a century, but for all succeeding ages—duties not for a province, but duties for the world; encouragements, promises, and precious truths, which, like the Author of all, are the same in the first and in the last century, and operative in all latitudes, in all longitudes, in all climes; fitted to man for yesterday, to-day, and for ever. In this my preliminary lecture, I intend to submit, what I trust will not be altogether unprofitable, some facts in the biography and character of him who is here named as the author of the Apocalypse. I have not done so before: I wish that every stage of our progress, in examining God's holy word, may be from light to light; that all that is to be learned of God, his ways, and people, may be learned by us.

I will therefore endeavour, as God may enable me, to throw some light upon the interesting biography of John, as far as that biography is unfolded to us, first in inspired, and next in ecclesiastical history. I need scarcely state, that all we read of John in the Bible is extremely meager. It is the unique and beautiful characteristic of the Bible, that the human fades away before the divine; the Apostle is lost in the splendour of the Apostle's Lord; John is made to decrease, that the Saviour of John may increase more and more. It must surely strike every reader of the Bible, how completely and consistently throughout, the human is made subordinate to the divine; so that the apostle, and the angel, and the evangelist, and the prophet, shine in a glory not their own, but borrowed from Him whose glories they were commissioned to reflect, and from whose Spirit they derived all their inspiration and their guidance. Far be it from me this evening to preach John as if he were the Saviour. We are told that we are to follow the apostles, but with limitations—"as far as they followed Christ." The great example is Jesus; subordinate ones, in their place useful and beautiful ones, are the apostles and evangelists who preached him. Let us therefore

try if we can gather any thing that will instruct, and cheer, and help us in studying, as far as the Bible discovers it to us, the biography of John.

It seems probable that he was born in Bethsaida, a small fishing village, and the same village of which Peter and Andrew and Philip were natives. There is something not accidental in this. Not a great metropolis was the birthplace of Christ the Lord; and little hamlets, and obscure villages and fishing-towns were the birthplaces of those who were likest him, who were chosen by him, and whose names shall be heard while Christianity endures, and Christ is loved and known. This seems to be, in this respect, in keeping with all God's procedure: "He hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; and things that are not to bring to naught the things that are." It seems that the Father of John was a fisherman; his brother was James, his mother Salomè. There is reason to believe that these were pious persons, and that in consistency with this they brought up John in the nurture and admonition of the Lord God of Israel. The name they gave him, John, which he himself here claims, "I John, who am your brother," is, literally translated, "the favour of God," or "favoured of God:" and when they gave that name, I doubt not they did so not without attaching any meaning to it; they gave it as the expression of the higher good they desired, or of the conviction they felt that John was a blessing given them from God; and probably from the first they anticipated that his life would show that his name was the symbol of reality and substance, and that he would indeed be favoured of God. In this world, names are mere empty sounds; in the Bible, they are realities. We live very much in the realm of fiction; the Bible speaks, and its true heroes act, in the realms of reality and truth. It appears that the employment of John, in common with his brothers, was that of a fisherman on the banks of the lake Gennesaret; one can well conceive that such an employment is calculated, from the dangers to which it is always exposed, to remind perpetually of Providence.

All was obscure, and humble, and lowly, in the origin of John; his parents fishermen, his birthplace a lowly village, and his own employment that of his parents. Nor is all this without in-

structive lessons to us and the church at large. It teaches us what we learn on every page of the Bible, that "not many great, not many mighty, not many noble are called;"—a passage, however, I may here observe, some times misconstrued; for it is quoted as if it taught that God does not call many great and noble to the knowledge and enjoyment of the gospel of Jesus; but this is not its direct lesson; the apostle is speaking, not of converts to Christianity, but of ministers of the gospel, when he says that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and thing which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence." When he says that not many of such great ones are "called," he means, not called to be ministers of the gospel, or preachers of the truth. Who knows but, in the obscure lanes and alleys of this great metropolis, where the only visitor of love is the pioneer of the ragged schools, and the only other is a visitor of law, the policeman, there may be concealed, in subterranean depths into which few except those I have referred to, find their way—or would follow in damp lanes and wretched dwellings—some yet undeveloped John, or Peter, or Paul; and we of this congregation may be the instruments, by the agency of our schools, of bringing forth from its concealment at least some bright and precious gem, that shall have engraven on it the name, and reflect on earth and throughout eternity the lustre of Him who loved us and redeemed us by his blood!

One day, John the fisherman, the son of Zebedee, heard a voice by the banks of the Jordan, which roused, interested, and enlisted him—it was the voice of John the Baptist, who is thus described by the evangelist himself: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but he was sent to bear witness of that light." The seer saw this John baptizing, and heard him confessing that "he was not the Christ, but that His shoe's latchet he was unworthy to loose." But he heard from him a still more touching and beautiful cry, "Behold the Lamb of God, that

taketh away the sins of the world." Two disciples heard the Baptist on this occasion, as we are informed in John's Gospel, (chap. i. 37,) and followed Jesus: one of these two was no doubt the evangelist himself; and in so doing they give us a beautiful and instructive example. John and Andrew heard the Baptist preach, but they did not follow the Baptist—they "followed Jesus." It should be so with us; we ought to hear the minister preach, but we must rise above the minister, and rest only on the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. It is a very interesting fact, too, that as John was converted by hearing Christ preached as the Lamb, so John is the Evangelist who, whether in his gospel or in the Apocalypse, brings forward Christ most frequently as the Lamb—"Behold the Lamb of God!"—and again in the Apocalypse he represents him as a "Lamb seated on his throne;" as if the first view of Christ presented to his mind were the view that was permanently before him in all its touching beauty and glory, and evermore most interesting to his heart. John was not made an apostle as soon as he was converted; he was left to show his consistency as a private Christian first; and, having illustrated and adorned the humbler office by his life, he was chosen to be a disciple, and subsequently to be an apostle; he acted the Christian well, and then was admitted to the ministry; he showed the consistency of the humble believer, and then he was consecrated to the dignity of the disciple of the Lord.

John and James were in their boat, on the shores of their native lake, or sea as it is called, mending their nets, when Jesus passed by and said, "Follow me;" and the record is, "straightway they left their nets, and followed Jesus." There was power in those words; they awakened echoes in the heart of the apostle; and he bore witness to Christ's truth, as not in word only but also in power. He became from that moment, we read, a *disciple* of Jesus, but he was not yet raised to be an *apostle* of Jesus. The distinction is this: the disciples were simply listeners to the teaching, and imitators of the example of Jesus; and it was only after they had served the apprenticeship of disciples, (if I may use the word,) that they were raised to the dignity of the apostleship.

We next find the appointment, or designation, or ordination of John, recorded in the Gospel of Mark, where we have these words: "And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would, and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils. And Simon he surnamed Peter; and James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, "sons of thunder." It seems a rather remarkable fact, that the most momentous scenes in the history of God's intercourse with man have taken place upon mountain-tops. The ark rested upon the loftiest pinnacle of Ararat; the trial of Abraham's faith took place upon the heights of Moriah; the law was given from Sinai; the blessing was attached to Gerizzim, and the curse to Mount Ebal; the temple was raised on Mount Zion; Jesus preached from a mountain as his favourite pulpit; he consecrated the apostles upon a mountain-top; he himself was crucified on a mountain; he rose to the skies from Mount Olivet: and thus, the most remarkable events in the history of the past all took place upon mountain-tops. Whether it is that those who were more immediately concerned were raised above the din and stir of the world below, and brought, as it were, into more silent and complete communion with God—or whether it was a symbolical act, we know not. Certainly there is something elevating and ennobling when one stands upon a mountain-top, and, lifted above all the bustle and stir of the world below, sees God's great earth beneath, and God's over-arching sky above; and forms, as it were, some conception of the grandeur and magnificence of Him who is enthroned upon the riches of the universe. We read in this account of the consecration of the apostles, that John and James were called Boanerges, the translation of which is given, viz., "the sons of thunder." We have been accustomed to view John as characterized by mildness and love exclusively; and we cannot well conceive, at first sight, why he was called by a name—"the son of thunder"—that seems the very antithesis of his character; and yet it may be that it was not nature that made the spirit of John so beautiful and calm, but the grace of God that so subdued and

softened it. We read that on one occasion John showed a spirit incompatible with the spirit of the Christian: he himself states, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us." Here was developed the spirit of the most exclusive sectarianism; "He does not take our form, he does not wear our name, or pronounce our Shibboleth, or conform to our ecclesiastical *régime*; we cannot excuse his doing the greatest good, because he does not do it in our way." This is the spirit of a bigot, and the very air and odour of the inquisitor. Yet such a spirit was in John: grace extirpated it, but originally it was there. But this last was not the only occasion on which John exhibited a spirit equally unchristian. It was he who said, "Wilt thou that we command fire from heaven to consume them, as Elias did?" Here was a budding Hildebrand in the college of the apostles. Popery is not a thing peculiar to Trent or to the Tiber; it is no exotic, it is indigenous to human nature. The corrupt heart is its congenial soil. It is not a stock that needs to be nurtured with care, and that will perish if left alone; it is a weed, that grows and flourishes spontaneously in human nature; and human nature, on which we sometimes hear so eloquent panegyrics, if left to itself, would develop all the sectarianism of the first incident I have shown, and break out into the proscription and the angry persecution indicated in the second. We conclude, therefore, that while there may be much that was excellent and beautiful in the constitutional character of John, he was indebted rather to grace than to nature for all by which he is characterized and most remembered in the Christian church. Nor did John himself ever fail to recollect the passion he had shown, and the rashness with which he had spoken; for it is he who thus writes, and writes from the depths of his own experience, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

One feature we find peculiar to the character of John—one which he assumes for himself, and a very beautiful one it is—"the disciple whom Jesus loved." He calls himself by this name throughout the Gospel; and in this he exhibits a trait very diffe-

rent from either of those to which I have just alluded. He does not say, "the disciple that loved the Lord," for there might have been there an assumption of distinction or merit, and superiority to the rest; but he says, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," thus showing that it was the grace of Jesus, not the merit of John, that was prominent in his holy and enlightened mind. But his character makes it evident, that whoever is loved of God, and feels that it is so, is just the man that will love God most ardently and enthusiastically in return. John showed this; he seems to have felt most deeply the love that Christ bore to him, and he seems to have responded most heartily in love to Jesus in return—a love alike human and divine; for we find him lingering near the cross to the very last, and, by the appointment of Jesus, taking charge of a mother who felt all the bitterness of one who had lost her nearest and her dearest son. Throughout all the writings of John, he gives evidence of his intense love, and adoration, and study of Jesus. His Gospel abounds with proofs of watching most minutely every trait and feature, and drinking in every word, of Jesus. We are told that he was the disciple who learned upon Jesus' bosom; and he seems to have been the disciple that drank deepest into the spirit, and unveiled the greatest portion of the inner experience of his Lord, in the precious Gospel of which he is the author. Nor can we fail to notice this in the marked contrast observable between his Gospel and those of the other evangelists. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we have all the miracles of Jesus recorded; in the Gospel of John we have fewer of the miracles, and vastly more of the discourses and the prayers of Jesus. The three first evangelists seem, if I may so speak, to have been dazzled by the splendour of the presence of omnipotent power; the last evangelist seems to have been riveted by the manifestation of disinterested love, and by the beauty, the condescension, the wisdom, and other heavenly graces, of which Jesus was the embodiment. The first seems to have recorded that which struck their senses with the greatest awe; the last seems to have recorded that which touched his heart with the most responsive love. John was one of the three special friends that Jesus seems to have been most frequently with. It appears that Jesus had,

if I may use the word—and use it with the profoundest reverence—his private friendship, for he was the human as truly as the divine. Certainly it appears upon the face of the narrative, that John and James and Peter were specially selected by Jesus to be his more immediate friends—to whom he showed more love, but for whom he did not suffer more. One of them is called “the disciple whom Jesus loved;” and the three are seen in more private and personal intercourse with the Lord, and they appear prominent in almost every great event in the history of the Saviour. These three—Peter, James, and John—are seen upon the mount of transfiguration, where they obtained a view and insight into the heavenly state, which Christ graciously vouchsafed to them alone, to be an earnest or prelibation of that glory for which they were candidates; and we may notice that, lest they should be too elated by the splendour of the scene they witnessed upon Tabor, these same three are introduced to the sorrowful and painful spectacle which they beheld in Gethsemane; and so true was the sacred penman to his duties and responsibilities, that John, who writes the narrative, records his and their shame, by stating that Jesus came and found them sleeping, and mildly and gently rebuked them for it. We find, too, John present with Jesus before Caiaphas and Pilate and Herod. We find him following his Lord to Calvary, and weeping amid the spectators of that awful and yet glorious tragedy. John alone has preserved the last words that were uttered by the Lord of glory—those memorable ones—“It is finished.” At the resurrection, John makes his appearance again. We read that Mary ran to “Peter and John,”—selecting those two as what I may call the favoured disciples—and told them that the body of Jesus was wanting; she said this with sorrow and with lamentation, not knowing that Christ was to rise from the dead; and when they heard the news, their conduct developed a rather interesting trait. “Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple,” *i. e.* John, “to the sepulchre; so they ran both together, and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre:” thus teaching us that Peter was an old man, and John a youth, and full of elasticity and vigour; Peter the most rash and enthusiastic, and therefore running as fast as he could, and yet John outstripping

him in the holy race, because younger, to see what had become of their beloved Lord. But when they arrived at the tomb, the old man's boldness contrasts with the young man's timidity, for while John drew back, as afraid, Peter went in first and alone. Indeed, we may observe that Simon Peter, wherever his physical strength was sufficient to be the vehicle of his inner enthusiasm, was always first. It is added, "Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and *believed*." I doubt not that John did not think that Christ was stolen by thieves, as some seemed to imagine, and the women then thought, but "believed" that he had "risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

After the resurrection, we find Jesus appearing specially to John and Peter; and John interposing to correct the false tradition that began to circulate respecting his own future destiny upon earth. "Peter, seeing John, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" In all these transactions, John refrains from mentioning his own name; he arrogates no glory; there is not even the aspect of egotism in his Gospel. He is willing that he should be the unknown disciple, if his Master may be made thereby more fully and clearly known. We learn from this passage, too, that tradition is very often not true; and that it is not, therefore, to be relied upon as the rule of faith, or an infallible, or even useful, exponent of it.

After this, John seems to disappear from the stage of the sacred narrative, with very few exceptions, and to remain at Jerusalem; where, according to ancient history, he continued for fifteen years, ministering to the wants of Mary and the necessities of the Christians there. We next find Peter and John raising up a lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, "who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold

have I none, but such as I have give I thee ; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Afterward we read that, when they were accused of doing wrong, Peter and John awed even their accusers by their boldness ; for, " When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." You will notice one very remarkable trait in the character of these two apostles. Throughout five or six chapters we find Peter and John together, but Peter always the eloquent spokesman, John always the silent witness for the truth ; and willing that Peter should have all the *éclat* of the orator, if such were worth having—and that he should shine simply as an example and proof to mankind—not by the excellence of his speech, but by the quiet beauty of his life—that he had been with Jesus, and had been transformed into his likeness. How interesting and instructive is this fact ! John had no envy or jealousy of Peter : he felt that Peter had the gift of speech, and that he had it not ; he was contented to be dumb because it was for the glory of God, just as Peter rejoiced to preach because it was, not more, but equally so. What should ministers of the gospel learn from this ? Let him that has great gifts be thankful, and use them ; let him who has fewer, be not jealous or envious, but submissive ; and let both recollect that they are responsible, not for what they have not, but for what they have ; and that what they have is not their own, but a talent given them from the great Master, to be restored to him with increase.

The next occasion on which John appears, is at the synod, convention, convocation, or general assembly of the Church at Jerusalem. We read, in Acts, of the presence of certain of the apostles on that occasion, but John's name is not mentioned ; and we only discover that John was present by an allusion of Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians : " When James, Peter, and John perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right-hand of fellowship."

After this the name of John disappears from the sacred page, except in his own writings ; he mentions it only in the introduction to the Apocalypse, on which I am now commenting ; and, as the scripture begins with God in Genesis, it ends with Christ in

the Apocalypse, and so fulfils the dying cry of the martyr of old, "None but Jesus."

After the destruction of Jerusalem, about the end, as is supposed, of Nero's reign, *i. e.* A. D. 66, Paul and Peter suffered martyrdom; but John was spared, and was the only apostle, we have reason to suppose, who survived the destruction of Jerusalem. We are told in ecclesiastical, not inspired history, that after this he went to Ephesus, one of the most celebrated cities of Asia Minor, to the Church of which he was the amanuensis of one of the epistles on which I am commenting, and laboured round about that place with great zeal and energy and self-sacrifice; and it is believed that it was here that he composed, or rather revised, his Gospel, which was written while the errors of the Ebeonites—a sect that denied the deity of Christ—were abounding, and with special reference to the confutation of those errors. Uninspired history records some particulars respecting the character of John, partly, no doubt, true, and partly apocryphal. It is recorded that he repeatedly drank cups of poison, and was not harmed; thereby fulfilling the promise of the Lord, "If ye shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt you." Another statement contained in one of the Fathers is, that he pulled down the temple of Diana with his own hand. This is evidently a coarse version of a great moral occurrence; it was the preaching of John, the wielding of "weapons not carnal, but mighty through God," that caused the downfall of that temple, and the destruction of thousands of others, of which a pagan writer testifies when he says that this religion spread throughout the Roman world, and wherever it prevailed the temples of the gods were utterly deserted.

When John was at Ephesus, his two most intimate companions were Ignatius and Polycarp. They were personal friends and acquaintances of John, and there are frequent allusions in the writings of the Fathers to the fact that these two had conversed with John, and seen him in the flesh. Ignatius was thrown to the wild beasts at Rome and destroyed, saying, with his dying breath, "I am the seed-corn that must thus be ground to powder, that it may rise again into a harvest of glory." And Polycarp, who is supposed to have been one of the angels of the Churches

whom John addresses, at the age of ninety-two was burned amid the flames for refusing to worship the image of the emperor, or to regard that image as worthy of religious honour.

There is a curious incident, whether true or not I cannot say, alluded to by more than one of the Fathers, that John was in the habit of amusing himself, when very old, with a partridge which he had tamed. One day, it is related, a huntsman, who was a professor of the gospel, came to John with his bow and arrows on his shoulder, and laughed at so great and venerable a man finding amusement in such a manner. John replied by asking the huntsman why he did not always keep his bow bent; and the answer was, because the string would be weakened, and the bow lose its elasticity. John answered, "That explains the reason of my amusing myself here; the bow must not always be on the stretch—the string must not be always under its severest tension." We read that just before his departure, John went into the congregation or assembly of the Christian Church at Ephesus, supported by two young men who had been converted to the knowledge of the gospel, and being unable to preach to the audience, or to address them so as to be heard, he was just able to give his dying testimony in these words:—"Little children, love one another." These were the last words that John uttered upon earth—the short but emphatic sermon that he preached with his dying breath.

It is evident that John wrote the Apocalypse in Patmos, and to that point I will turn your attention next evening. There is no doubt that John wrote the Apocalypse. Disputes were introduced into the Church upon this subject at a very late period of the Christian era, about the third or fourth century, when some of the doctrines contained in it came to be disputed; but all ancient testimony is unanimous on this point, that John, the evangelist and author of the three epistles that bear his name, wrote the Apocalypse, and that he did so by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Irenæus, whose name means, as you are aware, "the Peaceful," and whose writings are full of exhortations to forbearance and love and peace, was born A. D. 107, or, as is supposed by others, A. D. 97, which would be one year after the date of the Apocalypse itself, has these words:—"I can tell the

place in which the venerable Polycarp sat and taught, and his going out and his coming in, and the manner of his life, and the form of his presence, and the discourses that he made to the people, and how he related his conversations with John and others who had seen the Lord Jesus, and how he related the sayings of John, and what he had heard from him concerning the Lord, his miracles and doctrine—all which he related according to the scriptures."

There are expressions common to the Gospel and the Apocalypse which bear out the assertion that John was the author of this book, even if we had not the evidence we have, and the express declaration of John himself to that effect. For instance, in the Apocalypse we have such expressions as "the Word of God," *i. e.* Christ; in the Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word." In the Apocalypse, Christ is frequently represented under the figure of a Lamb; in the Gospel we read, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world!" In the Apocalypse, "He that is faithful, he that is true;" in the Gospel, Christ is called "the Truth," "full of Truth;" and in the Epistle again, "He that is true;" and other peculiarities of expression that indicate the same authorship in the one as in the other. In the Apocalypse we are told, "They also that pierced him shall wail because of him," and John is the only evangelist who refers specially to the fulfilment of that prophecy in his Gospel—"They shall look on him whom they have pierced." All these are little points that indicate that both the writings are the production of the same pen. We have one witness in primitive days to the fact of St. John being the author of the Apocalypse, namely, Justin Martyr, who was born in the year 105, and who wrote a dialogue with Trypho the Jew, about A. D. 140; he says, "A man whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, in the Revelation that was made to him." I quote these simply as specimens of proof, and not full evidence, which might easily be given, that John was the author of the Apocalypse.

And now, in concluding this short and necessarily imperfect sketch of the biography of one who introduces himself in the commencement of this book as its author, let me add, that the very meagerness of the biography which I have laid before you

is evidence of that great truth which pervades all scripture, that the apostles were contented to be nothing, that Christ might be all. They cared not how brief their biography was, if Christ's was so full. They cared not that their names should be lost in silence, if the name of Jesus should only multiply its echoes "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." Let us imitate their example; let us pray that we may imbibe their spirit, that there may be less in our hearts of human ambition, that there may be more, in all we say and do, of desire that Christ may be all and in all.

Let me notice, in the next place, that we have here the clearest disclosure of the most mysterious truths being made to that apostle who was characterised by the greatest love. Truth is only mighty when it is associated with love. Truth uttered by the lips of one whose heart is in the gall of bitterness may exasperate, but it will rarely sanctify; but when truth is the weapon, and love is the hand that wields it—when the truth is spoken not for victory, but from love to him that is ignorant of it—then it is mighty indeed. And so does Christ honour that love that he says, "If any man love me he shall be loved of my Father, and we will come in unto him, and make our abode with him." The pen of love wrote the Apocalypse; the heart of love will best decipher the Apocalypse. Love to God, and love to all that name the name of Christ, is one great means of being admitted into the secret place of the Most High, and receiving the knowledge that is denied to others.

In the next place, let me notice that John, through all his writings, dwells most prominently of all the evangelists and writers of the New Testament, on the Deity of our blessed Lord. His Gospel seems written especially to illustrate it; his Apocalypse is pervaded by frequent allusions to it. The Gospel of St. Matthew was chiefly to demonstrate the humanity of Jesus; the Gospel of St. John seems to have been written especially to unfold the Deity of Jesus; and thus the four Gospels together, like the whole Bible itself, present a perfect Apocalypse of the character of the Son of God.

Let me add one feature more. Whoever was evangelist, the Spirit was the Teacher; whatever was the form or the size of the

trumpet, it was the breath of God that sounded through it. All the peculiarities of Matthew, of Mark, of Luke, of John, of Peter, and of Paul, are retained, and may be traced and contrasted in reading their works, and yet they all spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Some have said, that if the Bible had been written as a beautiful essay, it would have been far more satisfactory to the minds of the educated, and no less instructive to the unenlightened. I think not. It would have been a dull book and a dry book; it would have made a far feebler impression upon the hearts of the bulk of mankind. But by using men of every cast and turn of mind and thought, and pouring through these, as channels, the truth of God—by not destroying John, but inspiring him; by not extinguishing Peter, but speaking through him—we have God's truth in all the various idiosyncrasies of men—in all the formulas of human speech; the same in nature, and distinguished by manifestation only; so that there is no peculiarity of taste, of temperament or talent or character, that will not find something in the word of God suited to it, and calculated to instruct the soul of him that reads it. Let us bless God for the Bible, then, as it is. Be assured, that the more you study it, the more you will love it; and they that know that book best will have the deepest and most indelible impression that God is its Author, and truth is its matter, and eternal joy its issue.

LECTURE II.

JOHN IN PATMOS.

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." REV. i. 9.

I MUST in this lecture continue the introductory remarks which I made last Lord's-day evening, on the peculiar position of him who was selected by the Spirit of God to be the seer of things that were, and the inspired prophet of things that were to come. On looking at the words which I have read, and at the era in which these words were recorded, I see two great kingdoms coming into collision, then prominent upon the stage of the world, and destined to throw up in that collision remarkable and startling aspects. The one kingdom was then in almost its meridian power, splendour, influence, and greatness; the last of the Cæsars, named Domitian, was its head. The other kingdom, in contrast to this, was then almost in its cradle; the last of the apostles, John, was its preacher, and its Sovereign was in the skies, and on the throne of his glory. These two kingdoms were present to the mind of John throughout this remarkable prophecy. The one had all the powers of Cæsar at its back—the other felt embosomed in the promises of Christ.

John was banished to Patmos for this crime—"the testimony of Jesus and the confession of his name." We are assured by contemporaneous writers, as well as records that have survived the age in which the Apocalypse was written, that to preach a religion new to the Roman empire was a crime branded by the name and chargeable with the guilt of sedition; and those who were thus guilty of preaching a new religion were sent to solitary and deserted places of banishment under the scepter of Cæsar. Among the rest John was banished to the isle of Patmos, where

he was obliged, at the age of ninety, to work in the mines and quarries for the profit of Cæsar, and as a punishment for the crime of which he was denounced as guilty. At this period John must have reached the age of ninety; and to be condemned to labour in the mines, or to excavate in the quarries of Patmos, under a heathen taskmaster, at such an age, was surely no slight punishment; and if John had not been sustained by bright hopes that spanned the chasm that lay between him and his home—if he had not had within him compensatory joys which Cæsar could not give, and which all the cruelty of Cæsar cut not crush—he had perished in the midst of his punishment, and, humanly speaking, the bright visions of the Apocalypse had been reserved for another seer to reflect on the church and on the world.

In order to give you some idea of Patmos, now called Patimo or Patmosa, I have borrowed two or three descriptions of it; one of the most interesting is that given by the Rev. Hardwell Horne, in his "Landscape Illustrations of the Bible," a work containing sketches of the principal places alluded to in the scriptures; he says: "Patmos, now called Patimo or Patmosa, is a small island in the Egean Sea, between twenty-five and thirty miles in circumference. Its aspect is forbidding and cheerless, and the shores are in most places steep and precipitate. The Romans used this barren spot as a place of exile; hither the Apostle John was sent for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus; and here he wrote the Apocalypse or Revelation which bears his name." This, I believe, is a mistake; the Apocalypse was written after he had escaped from, or was permitted to leave, the isle of Patmos. It is not known how long his banishment continued; but it is generally supposed that he was released upon the death of Domitian, which happened A. D. 96, when he retired to Ephesus. The acropolis or citadel of ancient Patmos was discovered in February, 1817, by the Rev. Mr. Whittington, on the summit of a hill which rises precisely on the narrow isthmus that unites the two divisions of the island, and separates the principal harbour from Port Merica. After some research he discovered very considerable remains of a large fortress. This rock or hill is not so lofty as that on which the modern town and monastery are built; but its singular situation between two ports render it

even more commanding. These remains lie on the northern side of the hill, and from the nature of the ground, the fortress must have formed an irregular triangle. The wall appears to have been seven feet thick, and the towers measure fourteen feet in front. The surface of the soil in its neighbourhood is much heaped with piles of ruins, and the whole area is thickly strewn with fragments of ancient pottery.

This island is described by Mr. Emerson (who visited it a few years since) as having every appearance of being of volcanic origin, and consisting of a rugged rock, with a sprinkling of soil, and a slight covering of verdure, which, with the sterility of the earth and the baking heat of the sun, is so crisp as almost to crumble in the hand. Here are very numerous churches, many of which are opened only on the anniversary festival of the saints to whom they are respectively dedicated. The modern town of Patmos, which is the only one on the island, and the monastery of St. John, crown the summit of the hill, about three-quarters of an hour's walk from the seashore, and which commands a very extensive prospect over the surrounding islands. The monastery consists of a number of towers and bastions, having much more the air of a military than a monastic edifice. It is said to have been erected by St. Christodoulos, in honour of the Apostle John, and under the auspices of the Byzantine emperor, Alexis Comnenes, in the year 1117, in order to serve at once as a residence for the brethren of St. John, and as a protection to the inhabitants against the incursions of pirates. It now contains accommodation for a numerous society of monks, who are under the protection of the bishop of Samos. By the special permission of the Grand Mufti of Constantinople, they enjoy the rare privilege of a bell to summon the brethren to their devotions, while all the other religious foundations in the East—the monastery on Mount Athos not excepted—are forced to convene their inmates to prayers by the striking a hammer against a crooked bar of iron. This much-envied privilege of the monks at Patmos is ascribed to the high veneration in which the Turks are said to hold the memory of St. John. Like most of the other Greek churches, the church belonging to the monastery is gaudy, without either taste or elegance. But the vestibule and the in-

terior are painted with semi-Chinese heads of Christ and the apostles, and the Parragia, or Virgin Mary, appears in every corner. The library of the monks contains a few printed books, chiefly the works of the Greek fathers, and also a considerable number of manuscripts, which seem to have been assorted and preserved with care. The hermitage of St. John lies about midway between the beach and the convent; it is approached by a rugged pathway, one side of which encloses, or rather is formed by the sacred cave in which the evangelist wrote his Revelation. Before the erection, according to Mr. Emerson, it must have been rather an exposed situation, as it is pierced but a very slight way into the rock; and as the monks carry on a very profitable traffic by disposing of pieces of the stone for the cure of diseases, a great portion of the present excavation may be attributed to their industry. Two chinks in the rock above are pointed out as apertures through which St. John received the divine communications. They are deemed to be incomparably sacred, and in point of sanctity are second only to the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem. The inhabitants of Patmos are about 4000 in number, and their appearance is perfectly consonant to the barren aspect of the island: the men being clothed in dirty cotton rags, and the women (who are handsome) being literally bundles of filth!

Such is the description of Patmos, the scene of the exile of St. John, as it has been given by modern travellers. The present inhabitants of Patmos seem to have some perception at least of the claims of Christianity; but in the days of St. John it is supposed there was not a single Christian in the isle to associate with him, or to fulfil the condition of the promise, "Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." But one rejoices to know, that when there is no visible assembly of the saints of God, there is a chancel—the holiest one in the universe—the chancel of a regenerated heart—in which Christ delights to dwell, and which he consecrates by his presence, and from which he receives the acceptable worship while he pours down his benediction on the worshipper; teaching us that wheresoever there is a Christian there Christ is. In the dark and dreary crypts in which the martyrs have pined, in the

Mammertine prison at Rome in which the apostles are said to have been imprisoned, in dens and caves of the earth, on barren moors, upon the ocean's bosom—wheresoever there is a child of God, there the Lord of glory delights to be present, to comfort, to strengthen, and to sustain him.

John, placed in this isle, you may easily conceive, must have had, during and after his toils, many interesting reflections. Let me suppose that he looked, in the first place, around him; he there saw on every side a desert isle, the type of a world that sin had polluted by its touch, and yet the *norm* of a world that he who came to redeem it shall retrieve and remake. In that barren isle John could hear the echoes of that voice which said, "Behold, I make all things new," and could see reflected in it, by the eye of unfainting hope and firm faith, all the splendours and glories of the New-Jerusalem; and the recollection that he had a franchise that admitted him to be a citizen of the Jerusalem above, compensated him for the pain and punishment felt in being an exile from the cities and the sway of the sceptre of the rulers of this world. Are any of you oppressed and broken down by a thralldom that is only exceeded by the drudgery of John in the mines of Patmos?—in John you have a companion in tribulation. There are subterranean mines in London, cellars below shops, which have been described to me, in which the young men—many of them my countrymen—are doomed, not by Domitian, who had some mercy in his composition, but by mammon, who has none, or by his slaves, who perhaps call themselves Christians—to drudge and toil and die. If I address any such this evening, I say, use the means of amelioration if they are within your reach, and wherever there is a Christian you will have one that sympathizes with you; but when that amelioration cannot be, try and draw into that subterranean scene of drudgery and toil bright visions of that better city in which there shall be no sin, and therefore no sorrow, but where all are free, and holy, and happy forever.

We can easily believe that John not only looked around him, but that he also took a retrospect of the past. Situated in Patmos, he may have recollected sixty years before, when Jesus rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and took his seat at his

Father's right hand. John recollected that touching scene when he rose from the Mount of Olives, and a cloud received him out of sight; and he may have recollected the voice that came from the cloud, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." John also recollected the prophecy of our Lord, recorded in Matthew xxiv., and he saw that prophecy in all the terrible results of its performance to the very letter. John had seen the Roman eagle spread its wings where the cherubim were; he had beheld the firebrands of Cæsar's soldiers blazing amid the carved work of the sanctuary of God; he had viewed the slaughter of the Jews—so great that the streets ran with their blood; and he had seen the refugees who escaped from Jerusalem dispersed and scattered through every land—evidences to heaven and earth of the faithfulness of the promises and the reality of the threats of God. John, too, had seen the arch raised by Vespasian to commemorate the destruction of the Jews, and the remains of which are to be seen to this day, on which is represented the shewbread and the seven candlesticks. He had seen also the coins that were struck, some of which are still preserved in the collections of numismatologists, on which Judah is represented seated under a palm-tree, weeping, with these words written beneath: "Sudea Capta"—struck to commemorate the destruction of Jerusalem. And thus the very wrecks of Jerusalem reveal the record, "Thy word is truth;" and the pæans and shouts of victory raised by Cæsar's soldiers announced that Jesus was the Messiah. All this John had witnessed, but from the midst of it he saw issuing a new and glorious power, despised by the great and the wise of mankind, which was destined to transform the world by its touch, to prevail against the craft of Satan, against the wiles of statesmen, against the wisdom of philosophy, against the policy of princes, against the power of Roman eloquence, and not to rest in its progress till the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. John saw this mighty principle—the Gospel of Truth—prevailing in various lands, erecting churches in Thessalonica, in Berea, in Athens, in Derbe, in Antioch, in Jerusalem,

in Syria, in Galatia, in Ephesus; leavening all classes with its principles, and snatching trophies from Cæsar's household, and the vine that was sown in Jerusalem beginning to twine its tendrils around the sceptre and add new beauty and new glory to the diadem of all the Cæsars. John saw that "mustard-tree," a sapling that was destined to grow and spread till it overshadowed the whole earth; and that spring from the Rock which was to prove a mighty stream, and to go forth and water every region of the world, till it merged in the everlasting and glorious main. John saw, too, what he must have regarded with great grief, intermingling tares of error and of superstition blending with Christian truth; heathen ceremonies grafted upon the simplicity of Christian worship; the humble fishermen of Galilee hoping to be the lords, and labouring to become the despots of the world; dark shadows settling on that clear horizon; weeds bursting into vitality and mingling with that auspicious field; a small cloud, "like a man's hand," spreading and expanding till it threatened to cover the whole canopy of heaven; and the seed of that upas-tree sown, under whose baneful influence all have perished that have placed themselves beneath it, and the consumption and destruction of which has been the desire and the prayer of, as it has been the promise given to, all the people of God.

Thus then John looked upon the past, and he saw the fulfilment of God's threatenings in the destruction of Jerusalem. He looked around at the present, and saw the spread of the gospel of Jesus; he looked into the future, and saw looming into view that dark superstition which Paul described when he said, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." After having thus then looked at the position of John, and at what one may suppose to have been John's views and feelings, let me explain what is meant by the phraseology here employed, "*I was in the Spirit* on the Lord's day." I conceive that this means simply, "I was under the influence and special direction of the Spirit of God." Thus in the Gospel of Mark we read of one "who had an unclean spirit;" but in the original it is "*in* an unclean spirit," plainly showing that the expression "*in* an unclean spirit" is equivalent to being under the influence of an unclean spirit; and

the parallel expression in the Apocalypse, "I was in the Spirit," plainly signifies, "I was under the influence of the Holy Spirit of God." I do not think, therefore, that such explanations as have been given by some commentators are correct, that John was in a trance, or an ecstasy, however well meant these expositions may be. As far as the word ecstasy means "being out of self," it may be properly used, for John was in the Spirit, and, in that sense, not in himself; he was under the special inspiration and guidance of the Spirit of God. Scenes too bright to be borne by man, prospects of grandeur and beauty which man could not foresee, shadows which man dared not forebode, were all to be unfolded and made conspicuous to the mind of John, and it needed that supernatural unction to enable and prepare him to behold and bear supernatural scenes. John was "in the Spirit" on a special day—"on the Lord's day." I wish to allude to this circumstance particularly, because it is evidence of a great truth that some are disposed to deny, that the Sabbath was observed by apostolic precept and apostolic example, not upon the *seventh* but upon the *first* day of the week. The word occurs in several passages of the New Testament. The change began as early as the day of Pentecost, when we read that the apostles were met together "on the first day of the week," and the Spirit of God was poured out upon them. We find it mentioned that the disciples met together on the first day of the week "to break bread," *i. e.* to communicate. Again, we have Paul incidentally telling the Corinthians to lay aside, or make their collections for the poor on "the first day of the week," language which implies that it was a well known day, disputed by none, but observed and hallowed by all. So we read here in the very commencement of the Apocalypse, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," meaning that day which was consecrated to the worship and service especially of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is alleged, however, that the fourth commandment makes the seventh day obligatory. I answer, it makes obligatory two things, the moral part, or a seventh portion of our time; the ceremonial part, or a recurring seventh day on which to hallow that seventh portion of time. What is moral is permanent as the stars; what is ceremonial is changeable as the clouds that pass over them. The moral part

of that commandment may be observed in every country, age, and clime; the ceremonial part cannot be observed precisely at the same moment in every part of the globe. For instance, our Sunday here is not Sunday at the antipodes. The farther east you go the earlier the day begins; so that persons who are not noting very carefully the chronology, and making allowance for change of longitude, will in sailing from the antipodes lose a day, or miscalculate the days of the week. It is plain, therefore, that if the seventh day was obligatory, that day which was the seventh to the Jew could not be that period which would be the seventh day to the inhabitant of the other side of the globe. But the kingdom of God is not meat, nor drink, nor ceremony, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The moral part of the commandment therefore, requiring a seventh portion of our time, is obligatory everywhere; the ceremonial part is to be fixed by apostolic precedent, or by the exact and indisputable prescription of God. We find that immediately after the resurrection of Jesus, converts from the Jewish religion observed both the Saturday and the Sunday, though the Gentile converts unanimously observed only the first day of the week. Let me quote from the earliest Christian writers one or two short illustrations of this. I do not quote the Fathers as a Tractarian would quote them, as if they formed part of our rule of faith, or as if their expositions of the Bible were equal to those even of a Matthew Henry, a Scott, a Barnes, or any other intelligent commentator. The fact is, we can quote from the Fathers sentiments and explanations contradictory of each other. As expositors of the Scripture they are exceedingly imperfect; as witnesses of facts their testimony is most invaluable. We care not whether it be Julian the Apostate, or Porphyry, or Justin Martyr that witnesses to a fact; we accept the fact on competent testimony. We reject for several reasons their expositions of the Scripture. Justin Martyr, who wrote forty years after John, but who was born before John died, makes the following remark: "On the day called Sunday all Christians meet together for religious worship." (*Apology*, c. ix. 17.) The word apology, I may add, is used in an ecclesiastical sense, and means a defence; thus Watson's *Apology* does not mean that the Bible needs a

modern apology, but simply a defence or vindication. So Justin Martyr, in vindicating the Christians to the emperor, gives an account of their principles and ceremonies. Another of the five apostolic Fathers says, "We observed the eighth day with gladness," *i. e.* the first day of the week, on which Jesus rose from the dead. Another Father, who wrote about one hundred years after the death of John, says, "We celebrate Sunday as a joyful day, and on that day we think it wrong to fast or to kneel in prayer: we always stand in prayer on the Lord's day." And Ignatius, who, as I told you last Lord's-day evening, was the friend and disciple of John, thus writes, "Let every one who loves Christ keep holy the Lord's day." These are evidences, then, that this day was, by the example of our Lord, and by the precedent of the apostles, acquiesced in as the Christian Sabbath, and from that day to this has been revered and treated as such. There is far more involved in the hallowing of the Sabbath than many are disposed to allow. The enemies of the Christian faith have failed to extirpate Christianity from the world. They have signally failed to invalidate the claims of the Bible to be a communication from God; they therefore try now to degrade and blot out and expunge the Sabbath from the veneration of saints and from the fear of sinners. They do so, not by fagot and flame, which, thanks be to God, in our free land, they cannot employ; nor yet by argument, and logic, and fact, which, thanks to the same God for the reason he has given us, they cannot successfully employ; they labour to extinguish the Sabbath by other and more seductive means—by the railway, the steamboat, the tea gardens, the various scenes of folly, and dissipation, and amusement, and profit in the neighbourhood of a great metropolis. It is a painful fact that more people leave London on Sunday morning by the rail and the steamboat than meet together in all the churches and chapels that are in it. Sad it is that God in his providence should have given us such instruments of rapid communication, and instead of making the additional time they leave us a reason for hallowing his Sabbath, we turn them into reasons for greater desecration of it. It was not Voltaire alone that deluged Paris with atheism, but the extinction of its Sabbaths before he was born. It was not Frederic the Great that destroyed

Christianity in Vienna, but it was the desecration of its Sabbaths before he was placed upon his throne. Get the Sabbath embosomed in the hearts of a Christian people, and there is a guarantee and pledge stronger than acts of parliament can confer, that Christianity will bloom and flourish in their land.

It is a well known law, too, that man must have a statedly returning respite from labour. It has been found and proved by some distinguished naturalist, that a horse worked seven days a week, year after year, will not do so much work, nor live so long, as a horse worked only six days in a week. And it has been proved with equal satisfaction that a man with mind and body ceaselessly on the stretch, will not only not long enjoy health, but will soon be the inmate of a premature grave. This is not fancy, but fact, the result of extensive experiment and induction. The heathens felt that they must have periods of relaxation, and therefore they had their holidays dedicated to their gods. The atheists of France could not do without a Sabbath, and therefore they had *decades*, or a period at the end of ten days instead of seven. It is wrought into the very constitution of humanity that man must have an alternation of toil and rest before he can do the greatest work and enjoy the greatest happiness. If this be so, (and we cannot deny it,) that man must have a respite, the question is, How shall that respite best be regulated, so that man shall enjoy health and strength upon the one hand, and that season of rest not be abused or perverted by man's wickedness on the other hand. Take away the restraints of the Christian Sabbath, and we shall have the Saturnalia of the heathen, or the abominations of the continent of Europe; but retain all the sanctifying influences and wise restraints of the Christian Sabbath, and we shall then have man refreshed by the change of subject, his mind turned from the cares of business to the hopes, the prospects, the joys, the truths of the gospel; and it will be found that long life is the accompaniment of righteousness, and that they who "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness shall have all other things added unto them." I speak thus of the Sabbath, because it is more assailed at this moment, probably, than any one institution of society. One delights to see that efforts have been made to interest the very humblest ranks in its

maintenance, and that a peasant girl has lately written a very forcible defence of the Sabbath.

Greater efforts have been made at various times to sap the foundations of the Sabbath than directly and ostensibly to destroy the claims of Christianity, or the obligation of baptism and the Lord's supper. The Puseyite longs for the Maypole and the Book of Sports as soon as the morning service is over; the Roman Catholic desires to see the playhouse open when mass is finished; the skeptic hopes for the extinction of the Sabbath, because it reasons in his conscience of righteousness, and temperance, and judgment to come; the debauchee votes for the cessation of the Sabbath, in order that he may have full swing for all the passions of his depraved heart without a solitary check; and the covetous man prefers to have the post-office open and the shutters of his shop window down, that he may buy and sell, and get gain, though the result will be, that he will fail probably in the earthly aim he has in view, and will lose his own soul in seeking to be rich at the expense of the commands and requirements of God.

John being thus in the Spirit on the Lord's day, heard the voice as of a trumpet behind him. This allusion is fraught with useful and instructive ideas to every one that studies it. When the morning service of the temple at Jerusalem was about to begin, a trumpet announced the fact; when the year of jubilee commenced, the silver trumpet announced it too; and the sound of a trumpet was the impressive introduction to a great truth, or to a glorious scene, at all times: when God made his appearance on Mount Sinai, his presence was ushered in by the sound of a trumpet; whatever public proclamation was made among the Jews was made by the sound of a trumpet. Thus we learn that the sound of a trumpet announcing the appearance of Christ, was indirect evidence that Christ was God; and secondly, we learn that the sounding of a trumpet preceding the scenes of this book, is evidence that it was intended for public perusal, not for private and individual instruction only. The voice said to John, "Write." This is an answer to those who say Christ never commanded any portion of Scripture to be written; here is one portion expressly commanded by him to be written. There is nothing for which we ought to be more thankful to God than

this, that the Bible is a written book. If the Bible had been left to tradition, we should have lost the truth long ago. Truth, left to the corrupting influence of human tradition, would have been perverted into some monstrous and extravagant legend.

What John was to write was to be addressed to seven churches. Why this number? There were more churches in Asia than seven. This number was probably chosen because seven is regarded in Scripture as a perfect number. Thus the seven days constitute one week; the seven prismatic colours constitute the pure white light; seven sounds, or notes, constitute the perfect scale in music; seven spiritual beings the one Holy Spirit; the seven churches represent the one catholic or universal church. Some have suggested that these seven churches are to be regarded as chronologically distinguished; Ephesus the first, denoting the state of the church during the first few centuries, and Laodicea the last, representing the state of the church just previous to the Millennium. I do not see that there is any foundation for this view. I think the addresses to the seven churches are applicable to every age, and that John writes them just as Paul writes to the Romans, or the Corinthians, or the Philippians; and we are to gather from these addresses not prophetic intimations of what shall be, but practical instruction to all the people of Christ, of every name and denomination throughout the world, for their progressive improvement in holiness, and their present joy and peace in prospect of the glory of God.

I have so far explained in these prefatory remarks the circumstances of John, and the origin of the addresses to the seven churches of Asia. Let me conclude this portion of my subject by this simple request—reverence the Christian Sabbath—be thankful for such a respite, amid the din and turmoil of the world—hail it as an augury of the millennial rest, the “Sabbatismos” that remains for the people of God. I believe that when the apostle says, “There remaineth therefore a rest,” or literally translated, “a Sabbath-keeping for the people of God,” he refers to the seventh millenary of the world. Clinton, the ablest chronologist of modern times, has proved, I think to demonstration, that the seventh thousand year of the world begins in A.D. 1862; and no less remarkable it is, that all the great prophetic epochs

terminate about that era, so that the sixth thousand year of the world closes, and the seventh thousand, which the church looks forward to as her rest—her Sabbath, begins, in the course of some fifteen or sixteen years. This Sabbath that we now enjoy, is an augury and anticipation of that; it is the hour of sunshine, in which we are to gather heavenly manna; it is the day when we feel what we otherwise know that we are—freemen, whom Christ makes free; when we can shut our minds to the din, and rise above the toils of the world. Be assured that the best way to make the Sabbath respected by our statesmen and legislators, is to make it seen that it is loved, and cherished, and revered, by ourselves. If all Christians would only reverence the Sabbath, and show, in all respects and under all circumstances, their thankfulness for it, we may depend upon it we should not need—however valuable they might be in their place—acts of parliament, or the countenance of Cæsar, to enforce it. It rests with the Christian church, whether the Sabbath shall be expunged from the days of England, or revered for years to come, as it has been for years past, as the pearl of days, and valued as the princess of the week.

Do I address any in affliction? It was in tribulation, we are told, that John beheld the visions of glory and of beauty that are recorded in this book. It is through tears of sorrow that the eye has often seen most brightly the Lord of glory; and when the great High-Priest of the church walks on his ceaseless watch amid the candlesticks, where, think you, does he hear the tones of the deepest adoration? where does he see the radiance of the greatest sanctity? It is not among the rich, that sip the full cup, or among the sensual, that eat and drink, and are merry; it is where some poor man sleeps, the hard ground for his pillow, the blue firmament for his curtain; or where some sick one lies upon the bed of languishing, or some weeping one sheds the tear upon the green turf that covers the remains of the loved and the near one. Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God. It is as brethren and companions in tribulation, that we shall see the brightest visions of God, and of his Christ.

Let me ask you, in the next place, to seek the Spirit of God, to lead you into all truth. It was “in the Spirit” that John had

the Apocalypse revealed to him : it is "by the Spirit" alone, that we can understand it. The knowledge of the original language may be valuable—acquaintance with philological criticism may be useful—but a higher acquirement still is to have the Spirit of God ; and if we ask the help and guidance of that Spirit, God has promised to bestow it. Let us, then, pray to God to give us that Holy Spirit, by which we may be enabled to love his Word, to venerate his Sabbath, to live to his praise ; and that when time shall be no more, we may be heirs of the kingdom of God, and shine like stars in the firmament, for ever and ever.

LECTURE III.

THE EVERLASTING HIGH-PRIEST.

“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”—REV. i. 12-18.

THERE cannot be a doubt, that he who is thus described, in language so solemn, and yet so picturesque, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can there be a doubt that the Being here delineated is also God; for the very acts and features peculiar to Deity are predicated and asserted of the Lord Jesus. Does Christ “walk in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks?” God said, (Lev. xxvi. 12,) “I will walk among you.” So our Lord promised in another place, “Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Again, he says, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive (or the living one) for evermore”—language clearly descriptive of Jehovah.

In order to show the unity that subsists in these portraits of Deity, between the revelations of the New Testament and the Revelations of the Old, we may read a somewhat similar description of Deity, presented to us in the Prophet Daniel, chap. vii. 9: “And I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery

flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him ; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him ; the judgment was set, and the books were opened." And so in chap. x. 5 : "I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz"—the "golden girdle about his breast"—"his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." There is no doubt that this was the Lord Jesus Christ who appeared to Daniel, as in all the other anthropomorphic epiphanies of the Old Testament, as well as to John, and that both these prophecies relate to the glory of the same Being, and the progress of the same gospel.

The first epithet by which Christ is here distinguished, is "the Son of Man." This name is rarely given by the evangelists to the Saviour ; but is almost always assumed by the Saviour himself, as best descriptive of his lowly condition. The phrase "Son of Man," is used according to the Hebrew idiom, to denote a state of special infirmity, humiliation, and suffering. Thus, in the Psalms it is said, "Put not your trust in princes," *i. e.* the highest of the land ; "nor in" what is contrasted with them, "the son of man," *i. e.* the meanest or the poorest of the land. We have thus, in this picture of Jesus in the midst of his celestial grandeur as the Son of Man, new evidence that his humiliation is not lost in his glory—that the cross is still resplendent amid the vision of the throne—that the name that was pronounced in Bethlehem, in Gethsemane, and on Calvary, is audible in the songs of the blest ; and thus the "Lamb as if he had been slain," is the sublimest, as it is the central feature of that glory which is yet to be revealed.

The next description of him is, "He was clothed with a garment down to the feet." This garment is unquestionably, from the minute description of it given in the book of Exodus, the robe that was worn by the high-priest, who is said to have been robed with it for sacredness, and for beauty, and for glory ; and thus the sacredness of the priest and the dignity of the king are

superadded to the humanity of the Son of Man,—whatever can indicate humanity and deity is revealed, in short, in order to constitute the full portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of glory.

It is added, there was a girdle about his loins. This is best explained by referring to the use of the word in other parts of the Scriptures; thus, Job xxi. 18 : “He girdeth his loins with a girdle.” Again, God is said to “loose the girdle of kings;” *i. e.* to reduce them to weakness; and when an ancient Jew, or Greek, or a Roman, who wore the long robe, called the toga, was about to engage in some manual labour, “he girded up his loins,” to use the Scripture language, or fastened the flowing skirts of his raiment by a girdle round his waist. We thus infer from the picture under which Jesus is represented, that he is not only clothed with sacredness, and radiant with glory, but girded with strength and might, omnipotent to save.

We read next, that “his head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.” The white or hoary head is always regarded in Scripture as synonymous with authority, reverence, and even beauty. Thus, Lev. xix. 32 : “Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man.” Thus, Prov. xvi. 13 : “The hoary head is a crown of glory;” and so venerable is age in the mind of Deity, that God himself is represented to us as the Ancient of days; and in Scripture, the cutting off of the hair signified the loss of honour, of authority, dominion, and power; and hence, then, we gather from this hieroglyphic portrait of Jesus, as having “hair like wool, and white as the snow,” that grandeur, authority, honour, and power, in their highest excellency, exclusively belong to him. He is then described as having “eyes like flame.” Fire is the most penetrating thing we know; it pierces and reduces all things: and eyes like flames of fire must imply the omniscience of Christ. His eye can reach all distances—rise to all heights—descend to all depths—and enter all concealment. There is not a thought in our hearts, but lo! he knows it altogether. It is his own assumed and just prerogative, “I am he that searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins of the children of men.” And what a solemn truth is this,—that there is not a thought that flits with light-

ning speed across a single mind in this assembly, that is not as clearly seen by God, and registered above, as I am at this moment seen and heard by you. "Search my heart, O God, and try my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Again, it is stated that his feet were as brass. This has also its meaning. Brass is used in Scripture to denote strength, endurance. Thus we read, "gates of brass," *i. e.* gates of great strength, and not easily to be broken open. Hence his feet being like brass implies that his enemies should be trodden down—that no obstacles should arrest him—that no difficulties should make him weary—that he is able to execute in his power the purposes of mercy and of love which he has formed toward his own. It is said that his feet, which were like brass, glowed like molten brass, "as if they burned in a furnace." This may denote the tribulations through which he would have to pass—the trials which he would have to endure—partly perhaps in his body, the church—the scenes of opposition through which he would have to pass, before his ransomed church would be lifted from her ruin, and reinstated in that glory, and dignity, and greatness which he had prepared for her before the foundation of the world.

It is next said, "His voice was as the sound of many waters," or, as the parallel passage in Daniel describes it, "His voice was as the voice of a great multitude." The apostle Paul thus describes the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, when he says, "Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." And this voice, which is like the sound of a mighty multitude, or like the roar of the restless waves, is that very voice which Christ himself describes when he says, "The hour is coming and now is, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth; they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation; and they that have done good, to the resurrection of life." This voice gathers volume and impetus every day; it is reflected in increasing echoes from every land; it mingles with the din of great cities, and asserts for itself supremacy and awe. It crosses unspun the sands of the desert; it sounds amid the noise of the

sea-waves and the tumults of the people; and one day this voice, which was so "still and small" in Bethlehem, shall be heard through the universe, and the universe shall respond, "like the voice of a mighty multitude," saying, "Salvation and honour and glory and blessing unto God: Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

"Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." We are at no loss about determining the meaning of this figure, for it is said that the word of God is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." And again, "the word of God is the sword of the Spirit;" and this teaches us that the secret of his victories shall not be "the sword of Cæsar, but the sword of the Spirit." Christ's kingdom shall be established over all the earth, not by the influence of diplomacy, or by the conquests of arms, but by the force of truth, the persuasiveness of love, the power of the Spirit of God.

"His face did shine as the sun in his strength." John saw the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and the very words which are here used to describe Christ in his apocalyptic glory, are almost the identical words employed by him to describe the Lord Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. So Paul describes him when he saw him on his way to Damascus, as surrounded with a light above the brightness of the sun; and he is described here not as the sun rising in the morning and struggling with mists, nor as the sun enveloped in clouds and almost eclipsed, but as the Sun of righteousness, shining in his meridian splendour, or "in his strength."

Such is the vision that John saw. When he beheld it, it is said, "he fell at his feet as dead." There is an intensity in the celestial glory which organs of flesh and blood cannot now bear. The eye of the mole cannot endure the light of the sun; and so the eye of flesh and blood cannot at present endure the vision of the glory of the Lord. It was the same vision that Isaiah saw and describes in chap. vi. of his Prophecy, where we read, that he beheld the glory of the Lord, and when he beheld it he fell at his feet, saying, "Wo is me! for I am a man of unclean lips; and mine eyes have seen the Lord of hosts." "This said Isaiah," says the evangelist, "when he saw his glory, and spake

of him." Are we prepared to behold him? "Every eye," we are told, "shall see him." There is not an eye that looks on me this night that shall not look upon the Lord of glory; and there is not an eye to whom that sight shall not be the twilight that ends in everlasting day, or the twilight that descends into everlasting night. It depends upon what you are now what shall be the impression that the first look of your Lord shall leave upon you.

When John fell at his feet as dead, it is said that he that appeared to him laid his right hand upon him. The right hand is frequently referred to in Scripture. Thus the Psalmist speaks of it in Psalm lxiii. 8: "Thy right hand upheld me." The right hand was also used in blessing any person. Thus Jacob laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, and blessed him. The right hand was also used in designating any person to an office; and thus John, by Christ's right hand being laid upon him, was designated to the office of a prophet, and consecrated to be the preacher of what he saw to all generations of the church. And when he laid his right hand upon him, it is said he added, "Fear not." This is equivalent to what he said to his disciples when he walked upon the sea—"Be not afraid: it is I." Fear not, John, it is I, on whose bosom you have frequently leaned; "it is I," John, whom you beheld hanging on the accursed tree—who gave Mary in charge to thee, and bade thee behold a mother—whose last accents rang upon your ear like a death-knell, and yet to the ears of angels as the first notes of the pæan of future victory—"It is finished." "It is I," with whom you walked and conversed in Palestine: "be not afraid:" the glory with which I am surrounded now has not dimmed my perceptions, nor deadened my sympathies, nor lessened my love; for thou art still the disciple "whom I love." "Be not afraid: it is I."

He adds the reasons especially why he should not be afraid. He says, "I am the first and the last;" all events are known to me; all that shall occur, from the last cry upon the cross to the first accents from the throne, "I make all things new," is before me—under my cognizance—subject to my power. Nothing can be before me, and therefore there is nothing that I do not know;

nothing can be behind me, and therefore there is nothing which I am unable to control. I am the first of all wisdom, and the last : in me is all knowledge, all fulness, all power ; and therefore "be not afraid." I will make the least things to be great, the weakest things to be strong, and the poorest things to be rich. "Fear not," John ; though I was crucified in weakness, I have been raised in power, and "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." "I am he that liveth and was dead ;" or, as it ought to be rendered, in order to distinguish it from the words that follow immediately after, "am alive for evermore"—"I am the living one." This is the assumption of the attribute of Jehovah. The meaning of the word Jehovah is, "I am that I am ;" *i. e.* the self-existent God. And when Jesus says here, "I am he that liveth," or, as it should be literally translated, "I am the living one," it is an assumption of deity. Either John was deceived, and Christ deceived him, or Christ is very God, the Lord of glory.

There is no medium, I have always felt, between treating our Lord as an impostor and worshipping him as God. There is nothing intermediate. Socinianism is gross and flagrant inconsistency. If Christ were not God, he deceived the apostles, or the apostles have deceived us. But we know that he is God : we cannot let go this truth. He is man to sympathize with your tenderest, your deepest sorrows—God to sustain you when all their billows flow over you. If Christ were not God, he never could have been my Saviour. Fallen as I am, marred, and weakened, and shorn of its pristine magnificence as my soul is ; yet, even in its ruins, I believe that soul to be the greatest thing in the universe, except God himself ; and I would not trust my soul to the care of an angel, or to the keeping of an archangel : I will take charge of it myself, if I cannot find a God to take charge of it for me. But I know that Christ is God over all, blessed for evermore : I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able—able as he is willing—to keep that soul which I have committed unto him against that day. He says, "I am the living one." Paul also said, "I live ;" but lest that word should seem to trench on the prerogatives of deity, he corrected himself, and added, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." But when Jesus

said, "I live," it needed no correction, because it asserts the attribute that rightfully belongs to him. He describes himself in his word as the Fountain of all life. So the beloved John, the Seer of Patmos, in the epistles that he wrote to the Christians, says, "That which was from the beginning, which we have seen and our hands have handled of the word of life." The most wonderful thing on earth is life. That worm that creeps along the wayside is a more wonderful and impressive evidence of power, than the steam-ship that ploughs the main, or the railway train at its mightiest speed, or the most magnificent combination of machinery that the genius of man has yet devised. Life is the most wonderful thing, and it is just that thing which man has the least control over—which he cannot continue as long as he pleases; it is that power, the reins, and length and limits of which God holds in his own hand. Man has tried to mimic it: God only can create it. Some foolish physiologists lately pretended that they had discovered a process by which they could make life, and dreamed that by galvanism they could create living creatures. They imagined a vain thing. God alone is the Fountain of life; and he not only makes it, but he alone can sustain it. And who knows what wonders of life there are beneath, as well as what mysteries of life there are above? The microscope has shown us myriads of living creatures the eye cannot see: there are probably infinite gradations below, as there are infinite gradations above. Man is the connecting link between the highest animal and the lowest angel. We have the angelic life in our souls, we have the animal life in our bodies, and both from Christ. The life that is in a child of grace, the life that is in the insect that floats in the sunbeam, or in the eagle that spreads his pinions on the wind—the life that is in an angel, or that which is in a babe—the life of the soul—the life which is eternal,—has its origin, its maintenance, its limits in Christ.

We cannot present any satisfactory solution of the phenomena of life; and when our solution seems satisfactory, it is not its truth, but our ignorance, that makes it appear so. When the physiologist describes the working of the mechanism of the human frame, he says, "This muscle moves because it is pulled by that, and that other muscle moves because it is awakened by

that nerve." But if you ask him why all this continues, he will tell you, "Because the heart beats." But if you ask why the heart beats, the physiologist is dumb; he cannot go any farther. The only answer is the Christian one—what a peasant believes, and a philosopher cannot comprehend—God moves the heart. And there is not a heart beating in this assembly which the touch of God does not every second compress and dilate. And if this be so, how frightful is the position of that man who lives in rebellion against the will and commands of him who has only to withhold his finger, and the heart that is now full of life shall become cold and silent in the grave! Our existence is a constant reciprocation of life and death. The beat of the heart is life, the pause between is death. When the heart pauses, it silently puts up this question to the great Author of life: "Shall I go on?" and God says, "Go on." We get the lease renewed, not every year, not every month, not every week, not every day, but every second: we have no freehold, nor have we a leasehold of life; we have the sovereign renewal of life each second. Were God to say to thy heart, "Be still," thy spirit would instantly escape from the ruin. Would it be where the soul of Lazarus is, in Abraham's bosom, or where the soul of the rich man pines, lifting up itself in hell, being in torments?

He adds, I am he also "that was dead." This is a paradox. I am the living one, and yet I am he that was dead. There is no real contradiction; the life died, the Lord of glory was crucified: God in our nature suffered. Why? Because he took our place, and this was the penalty that we had incurred. He died because our sins were laid upon him; he died with nothing in him worthy of death, that we might live who have nothing in us worthy of life. Our sins made him die, his righteousness alone can make us live. He died, not because he had done what was evil, but because our sins were laid upon him; and we shall be admitted into heaven and live forever, not because we have done what is good, but because his righteousness was laid upon us. You cannot have too strong a grasp of this truth—that you are saved from first to last by nothing in you, nothing by you, nothing of you; but by the finished righteousness of the Lord of glory, the living one that died, the just for the unjust.

And "I am alive," he adds, "for evermore." This is distinct from the first "live;" he says, "I am the living one," *i. e.* Deity. "I died;" here is evidence of his humanity: "I am alive for evermore;" here is his resurrection-life, and the evidence that deity in humanity triumphed, and that the grave having received what it thought a victim, felt it had embraced its conqueror. He entered our grave apparently its victim; he rose really its vanquisher. "He is alive for evermore;" "the first-fruits of them that sleep;" for if we believe that Jesus died, as he is here stated to have done, and rose again, even so them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him; and if we were reconciled to God by the death of Christ, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And thus in these few words we have an epitome of the everlasting gospel. The living one, for none else has life, that is, God in our nature died, because "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins;" God in our nature is, too, the risen and the living one, for "he ever liveth to make intercession for us." And thus in these words we have an epitome of the gospel.

He adds, "I have the keys of hell and of death." The word here rendered "hell" is not Gehenna; in this is confusion in our translation. There is the word Hades, which means literally the invisible world, and there is the word Gehenna, which means the place of the damned. And so it is stated afterward in this book: "death and hell (*θάνατος καὶ ᾄδης*) were cast into Gehenna." "What?" you say, "is there a middle state?" I answer, No: there is no purgatory; but when the Spirit of God speaks of the soul as severed from the body, without specifying whether that soul is in happiness or wo, he states "it is in Hades." It is not a third place, but a third condition; it is not the soul united to the body, that is one condition; it is not the soul united to its resurrection body, that will be its condition on the resurrection day; but it is the soul in a state of happiness or a state of wo, according to the character in which it died, neither in its old nor in its new body, without its being expressed whether it is in the one or in the other. When our Lord therefore says, "I have the keys of hell and of death," it is as if he said, "I have the key that unlocks the grave, and

out of which the buried dust shall rise instinct with a life that shall never die; and I have the key that unlocks the world of spirits, and shall bring the soul either from its fiery bed in hell, or from its beatific throne in heaven, to be united to a risen body, to be rewarded in eternity according to the deeds done in the body.

To have the key means, to have authority, power, jurisdiction; and I may state here, that if Peter received the keys that are here specified as a special grant from the Lord, it is quite plain that Peter surrendered them again; or, at all events, that the keys which Peter received were different from the keys which are assigned to him by his pretended successors, and which are here described. It is quite plain that the popes, Peter's so-called successors, try to use not Peter's keys, which admitted the Gentiles into the kingdom of God, but they assume to wield the keys of the Lord of glory; for they pretend that they can open the gates of the world of spirits, shut the gates of hell, and unfold the gates of heaven, when, where, and to whom they please. According to their own showing, therefore, the keys they pretend to wear are not the keys of Peter, but the keys of Christ thus blasphemously assumed in derogation of his glory, and to the destruction of the souls of thousands.

Now having seen this hieroglyphic portrait of Jesus, the Lord of glory, representing under symbols great and glorious features, which eye hath not seen and cannot now see, and which ear hath not heard and cannot now hear, let me sum up the whole of this portrait by stating that it is the great design of the Lord in this vision which he unfolded to John, as the drapery clearly shows, to exhibit himself as the High-Priest of his Church. The Apocalypse begins with Christ as a priest and ends with Christ as a king. It begins with Christ as a priest, making atonement for the sins of his people, and it ends with Christ as a king, with many crowns upon his head. We shall see the beauty and the importance of opening this book with the picture of the Lord Jesus Christ as our priest, if we remember that among the ancient Jews their priest was the grand centre, under God, of their hope and their happiness.

The rock could give them water, the skies could give them manna, the pillar of fire could give them light, the cloud could

give them shade ; but their High-Priest alone could intimate to them the forgiveness of sin. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was addressed, as its name implies, to the Jews, how constantly does Paul bring this truth forward. Thus, chap. iii. 1, "the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;" chap. iv. 11, "We have not an High-Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Again, chap. vi. 20, "Jesus Christ, . . . an High-Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec;" chap. vii. 26, "Such an High-Priest became us, who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's : for this he did once, when he offered up himself." This book, and each epistle to each of the seven churches, on which I shall address you by-and-by, begins with some feature of Christ as the High-Priest ; every address is introduced by a feature taken from this grand apocalypse with which the book opens, showing us that Christ the High-Priest was the glorious manifestation that was prominent before the seer ; and the reason is, no doubt, because the priestly office of Christ is that which is most replete with comfort ; his prophetic office is full of light, his kingly office is full of power, his priestly office is rich in consolation, in joy, and in peace. Let me show this by briefly describing what were the three great offices of the high-priest. The first was, to make atonement for his people, once a year especially, and regularly making atonement twice a day with the sacrifice of a lamb. The second was intercession, when the high-priest went into the holy place, and made intercession for the people ; and the third was blessing, when the high-priest came out of the holy place and blessed the people. To all these Christ the High-Priest, set before us in this picture, completely corresponds. As the high-priest divested himself of his glorious robes, and made atonement for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people outside the holy place, (and without shedding of blood there is no remission,) so Christ laid aside his glory, and suffered without the camp, and made a perfect atonement for the sins of all that believe ; so perfect, that no contribution of ours can add to its efficacy, nor any lapse of years waste its excellence. Whole worlds may rest upon it, and more worlds still might be saved by it ; a sacrifice so complete that

there is forgiveness through it for the greatest sin, and acceptance in it for the guiltiest criminal. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

Secondly, the high-priest when he had made the offering went into the holy place, and there, bearing on his bosom the names of the twelve tribes, he interceded for the people of Israel. So Christ has done. Where is Christ now? He is in the true holy place—the holy place not made with hands—making intercession for the people. Notice, too, how instructive this is: when the high-priest of the Jews was in the holy place he entered alone; not the highest Levite or the most honourable priest dared enter with him. He was alone amid the awful glory that shone between the cherubim, pleading and interceding for the people. So Christ *alone* intercedes for us. We would not thank an angel for the offers of his intercession; we need not the Virgin Mary's prayers, nor would either be allowed. We have one who ever liveth and maketh intercession for us; we know that it is an insult to an angel and a dishonour to that angel's God to presume that any one but the high-priest himself might enter into that holy place and make intercession for us. While the high-priest was thus in the holy place interceding for the people, there was no propitiatory sacrifice going on without. As soon as the sacrifice was finished, the high-priest went into the holy place, and while he was interceding no sacrifice could be offered. If Christ be now in the true holy place, interceding for his people, there can be no propitiation going forward on earth; the idea, therefore, that there is any thing propitiatory in the Lord's supper, or that it is "a sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead," is inconsistent with the office of Christ and blasphemous in the sight of God; and may well be termed "a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit." This intercession of the high-priest is to us just as important as his atonement. Christ's atonement opened the doors of heaven—Christ's intercession keeps them open: Christ's sacrifice gives us a right to heaven—Christ's intercession makes us fit for entrance into it. The cry of ever-watchful Satan is, "Cut is down;" the interceding cry of the everlasting Intercessor is, "Spare it yet another year." Our safety is our dependence on this intercession. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath

desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat"—there is thy danger; "but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not"—there thy safety is. Wherever you have a minister that preaches the everlasting gospel, you have that minister as the fruit of the intercession of Christ. If men could only feel this more, they would think less of other things. Mere succession from the apostles, historical and lineal, is an absurdity which is not, and cannot be, and has been broken and interrupted a hundred times. The name, the form, the ceremony are nothing. It matters not whether a patron presented you, or the people elected you; that is nothing. It matters little whether you read your sermons, or preach them without reading; it is nothing. If you preach the gospel, and preach it in its fulness, and live the evidence of its power, your mission is from above. Such a minister is the direct gift of our blessed High-Priest interceding for us; for "when he ascended up on high, . . . he gave some, apostles; and some, teachers and pastors; and some, evangelists; for the edifying of the church: till we all come in the unity of the faith unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Our perseverance rests upon the intercession of Christ. He says, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me." "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who also maketh intercession for us."

The last inquiry I would notice is, the high-priest having first made atonement upon the brazen altar without the temple—and Christ died upon Calvary, without the camp—having, secondly, gone into the holy place, and burned incense upon the golden altar, and made intercession for the children of Israel—and Christ is now doing that same thing—what the people of Israel were doing while the high-priest was thus within the holy place pleading for them. They waited outside with trembling or hopeful—certainly anxious—hearts till he should come out of the holy place, and pronounce upon the people that blessing which is recorded in the Book of Numbers: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." When the high-priest had finished his

intercession in the holy place, he came forth before the congregation, who waited outside, arrayed in the garments suited to this part of his functions, and thus blessed the people. The Lord of glory has not yet come forth from his holy place; earnest and foretastes of the blessing are granted and experienced here, but a day comes with the speed, and it will arrive with all the splendour, of the lightning, when our High-Priest shall come forth from his holy place, and standing in some lofty height in the creation of God, shall wave his consecrating hand over Nature's length and breadth, and then shall be fulfilled that psalm, "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. The earth shall yield her increase: all the people shall praise him; and God, even our own God, shall bless us." And just as the Israelites waited for their high-priest to come out of the holy place and pronounce the blessing on them, so all true followers of the Lamb are patiently waiting for the coming of Christ. They have seen him and believed in him as their sacrifice; they lean on him and they look to him as their intercessor before the throne; and they hope for his coming forth when the time of intercession shall close, to pronounce a benediction, not in word, but in power, which shall descend to creation's heart, and run to the circumference of the universe, and the whole world shall bask in paradise its close, as it shone with paradise, its commencement.

A Christian's retrospect is on the cross; his present attitude looking to the holy place, and leaning on the interceding High-Priest; his hope is the anticipation of that day when Christ shall come forth and pronounce the benediction which is to make all the earth and the world, and all them that dwell in it, happy. This earth needs but his blessing, and it shall then bloom like the rose; it waits for the touch of his consecrating footsteps, and its every desert shall smile. I believe that our earth is not to be cast away; it is not a worn-out thing. The devil shall not have it; the last fire shall not extinguish it. I believe it is Christ's by purchase, and it shall be restored to its primeval beauty, and shall constitute that holy place of which it is said, "I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

LECTURE IV.

THE SEVEN STARS AND SEVEN CANDLESTICKS.

“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”—REV. i. 20.

It must be obvious that the form of expression used by the seer in this passage is elliptical; it is common to the prophetic writers, and when properly weighed, can lead to no misconception of their meaning, or of the nature of the statement that is placed before us. The word “are” is evidently equivalent to “signify:” “the seven stars” signify or represent “seven angels;” “the seven candlesticks are,” *i. e.* signify or represent “seven churches.” This use of “is” and “are” for represents and represent (or what is all but equivalent to it) occurs above thirty-seven times in analogous portions of Scripture: such, for instance, as “seven good kine *are* seven years;” and again, “these dry bones,” in the valley of vision, “*are* the whole house of Israel;” and in thirty-six out of the thirty-seven times, the Church of Rome interprets the phrase as we do, explaining the word “are” to mean “signify;” but in the thirty-seventh instance, and in that alone, which occurs in the history of the institution of the communion, and in which the words are, “this *is* my body,” she lays aside the process which she has pursued in the interpretation of all the thirty-six passages I have referred to, and adopts a new interpretation, the issue of which is the most monstrous of all monstrous dogmas held by that communion, *viz.* Transubstantiation.

Now, surely, you need nothing more to convince you how utterly false her interpretation is than this, that she is afraid to carry it out. She contrives to change her interpretation just where her interests or her previous infallible decisions are concerned. Wher-

ever her infallible decrees are not touched, she interprets as common sense would surely lead us to interpret; but wherever the decisions which she has come to by her councils and in her traditions go against what is the plain and obvious meaning of the passage, she lays aside the whole plan that she has pursued in interpreting the rest of the word of God, and puts upon the passage—the aid of which she insists on at all hazards—a new, unnatural, and unjustifiable interpretation. Instead of bringing her theology to God's word, to be settled and controlled by it, she brings God's word so her synods, popes, and decrees, to be controlled, and shaped, and formed by them. Here is just the broad distinction between the principle of Protestantism, as held by all Christians, and the principle of Romanism, held by true Romanists and by pretending Protestants, who are really papists. We believe that all creeds, however plausible or popular, must be tested by this word; and if they are found inconsistent with it, they must be repudiated, whatever be the consequence: and all truths, however unpopular they may be, that can be substantiated here, must be clung to in life, and cherished in death, and borne with us to the judgment-seat of God.

The “angels” (who are here represented by the seven stars) I do not discuss controversially; plainly, these angels are ministers of some kind,—the whole context shows that they are so. Whether they were bishops, or presbyters, or deacons, or apostles or evangelists, or what they were in ecclesiastical degree, is the least thing; that they were ministers of the gospel is plainly and distinctly intimated in the passage. Milman, who has written a history of Christianity, has stated that the angel here corresponds to the Jewish official, who was a sort of secretary or writer in the synagogue, but not possessed of any official superiority to the rest of his brethren; on the contrary, he was subject to and controlled by them. The Independents say that the angel was an Independent minister; the Scottish Church would assert that he must have been something like the moderator of the General Assembly; the Church of England says he must have been a bishop or an archbishop. My impression is, that perhaps he was none of the three. I do not think the moderator of the General Assembly is very much like the Apocalyptic Angel; and I really suspect, what

I hope is without offence, that neither the Bishop of London, nor of Exeter, nor any other bishop on the bench, is very like him; and I doubt whether the Independent minister would in all respects correspond to him.

Without looking at the angel in the light of the Church of England, or the Church of Scotland, or any other church, we shall view him simply as he is here revealed to us—as a minister preaching the gospel, and making known to the churches the unsearchable riches of Christ. This name, as applied to the ministers of the gospel, seems to me to be an extremely beautiful one. The word “angel” we have retained in our translation of the Greek word *ἄγγελος*, but we need not have done so, for the apostle Paul uses this very word, and we translate it “a messenger.” The proper meaning of the word *ἄγγελος* is messenger: we use the technical or special term angel, but we might just as correctly use the word messenger. Thus we read in the Old Testament, “He maketh his angels” (or messengers) “a flame of fire;” and in Hebrews, “Let all his angels (or messengers) “worship him.” And this is the strict and literal sense of the epithet here bestowed upon the ministers of the gospel. The gospel is the message—the ministers of the gospel and the evangelists are the messengers. The gospel itself is, literally, “the message of good news;” and the evangelists are simply the messengers of good news; and hence Paul, in addressing the churches to whom his Epistles were written, says, “Ye received me as an angel of God.” Now, if you understood angel there in its special or limited sense, you would misapprehend the meaning of the apostle. I do not believe it means that they received him as they would have received an angel, but that they received him as the messenger of God, making known the glad truths that God had commissioned him to preach.

You will see, then, that if the term messenger be used as a word descriptive of the minister of the gospel, his great mission is simply to make known the message. The angel or messenger is not one that rules, but one that speaks; it is less action and more utterance that is to characterize him. In the language of an ancient writer, he is to use *non verbera, sed verba*—“not stripes, but words;” his office is to be pastoral, rather than sovereign; he is to be the humble messenger, not the imperial

dictator. And the great beauty of his character will be, not the eloquence or the power, but the faithfulness, with which he delivers his message; and hence, says the apostle, we require in such ambassadors that "they be found faithful." Earnest they will be, if Christians; eloquent they may be, if God has given them that gift; faithful they must be, to have any claim to be angels or messengers of God at all.

The next symbol used in this place to represent the ministers of Christ is, "stars." These angels or messengers are represented under the sign or symbol of stars. Now, what is the use of the stars, as far, at least, as we are concerned? Their relative usefulness to us is measured only by their power of giving light. What the nature or the contents of Jupiter, Mars, or Saturn, or the moon, or the sun may be—what their atmosphere may be—what their density, or distance, or size, or shape, or population may be—are questions for astronomers to dispute about; but to the mariner on the ocean's bosom, or to the traveller in a dark and stormy night, the value of the star consist not in what is in it, but in what it sends down—that quiet and beautiful light that leads them to their home. It is just so with the ministers of the gospel. I care far less what the succession may be to which they pretend—what the commission may be of which they boast; or even what their talents may be, or what ecclesiastical preference they have—these are matters for synods, and bishops, and conventions to discuss; but as the best star is that which shines the brightest in the sky, and casts down the clearest light upon our pathway, so, we may depend upon it, be he Episcopalian, or Presbyterian, or Independent, or whatever you like to call him, he will, in the long run, be felt and seen to be the best minister who sheds upon our path the clearest light, and leads us most directly to the Lamb.

These stars, in the next place, have not their light originally and inherently in themselves. All the planets derive their light from the sun. There is no evidence that Jupiter, for instance, has any self-derived luminous power around him, which he transmits to us; but there is conclusive evidence that whatever light comes from evening or morning star, comes from it only in proportion to what it receives from the sun, the great centre of the

system. In other words, the light of the stars is a borrowed, not an original light; and the light that we receive from them is the reflection of what they receive from the sun. Does not this give us some idea of what a Christian's life should be, and still more what a minister's preaching should be? We do not want from the minister the light of science, except so far as it may serve to clear away obstructions from the truth. We do not want the light of philosophy, or of any thing else that is connected with the knowledge, or contained in the encyclopedias, of man; but what we need in the house of God is light from the sun; and the minister's sermon should be a mirror to reflect that light, and the minister a star to transmit that light; so that if you come to the house of God and hear discussions about endless genealogies, and anile fables, and the beauty of science, and the glories of astronomy, and the discoveries of chemistry—all good and beautiful in their place—and nothing besides; then you come to a wandering star—a star that may mislead you, like an *ignis fatuus*, to the depths of perdition; but not to a star placed by the Sun of righteousness in its socket, to reflect upon a world that lieth in darkness, the light of that unsetting Orb, who will soon ascend his meridian with healing in his wings.

In the next place, we may note that stars shine only in the night-time. This is an important point. When the sun rises above the horizon, the stars are instantly put out; not one of them is visible. It is only when the sun has sunk below the margin of our horizon, that the stars begin to twinkle in their orbits, in order to supply by their dim and distant rays the absence, for a season, of that glorious luminary. The ministers of the gospel are only here until the Sun of righteousness shall shine from his meridian throne. At present that Sun is but just above the horizon, and only a portion of his beams is visible; his rays at present are horizontal, and hence the best church and the holiest Christian have each very long shadows; but a day comes when he shall rise to his meridian throne, and be vertical forever—when there shall be one everlasting and glorious noon—when there shall be no shadow, but all perfect light. And in the effulgence of that light the stars that have twinkled in ten thousand pulpits shall be quenched, and we shall no more teach

every one his neighbour, saying, "Know the Lord;" for all shall know him, from the least even unto the greatest. *Now*, there is darkness, therefore there are ordinances—*then*, there shall be no night, and therefore no ordinances. *Now*, the ministers of the gospel are needed to reflect the sunlight—*then*, the reflector shall not be required, for we shall bask in the full blaze of that bright Original, which shall put out the sun, and moon, and stars, for "they have no need of the sun, nor of the moon, for the glory of God and of the Lamb doth lighten it."

To show you that as the stars are only for the night, so ministers are only for this dispensation, I refer you to what the apostle says in Eph. iv. 11: "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." Then, after his ascension, "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." For what purpose? "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Now, how long? (I wish you specially to notice this)—how long are ministers to continue? "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." There will be no such thing as perfect unity in the church till the perfect Source of unity is in the midst of it. It is the want of Christ that makes a divided church; and therefore were there more Christianity, there would be less division in the church; if Christ's presence were more fully realized, there would be greater unity in the midst of it. But the moment that there is perfect unity and perfect conformity to the stature of Christ, then the ministers of the gospel will be done away; their functions will have expired. All then will be priests, all will "know even as they are known."

This suggests a very useful advice—guard against what I have called wandering stars. Often the one that twinkles most brilliantly is not the one that you are to trust most implicitly; a meteor has a momentary splendour equal to that of many stars. Trust God alone implicitly; pin not your faith to a lawn sleeve, nor to a silk sleeve, or you will speedily find your mistake; bring all preaching to the Law and to the Testimony. "How read-

est thou?" "Have ye not read?" "Is it not written?" "Thus saith the Lord." Many persons have made it a complaint against Christianity that there have been, what there are, bad ministers. I reply boldly to that objection, If there were no bad ministers, Christianity would be untrue. You say, how can that be? Because it is expressly predicted that such ministers would be in the church; for what does the apostle say? There shall come among you grievous wolves, false apostles, and shall deceive many; and some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And the prophet tells us that the prophets shall prophesy falsely. And what shall the people do? Instead of opening their Bibles, and testing the preacher's doctrine, they will "love to have it so." My dear friends, do not be misled. I believe this great truth ought to be taught at the present day, viz. that a truly Christian and converted people—and, alas! all communicants are not so—do know what the gospel is, and they ought not to listen to what is not the gospel; no prestige of circumstance, no pretence of sect, no attachment to party, no admiration of talent should induce you to place yourselves and your children under a minister who can neither teach them, nor instruct them, nor comfort them. Prefer the vessel that is dear to you, but touch not the vessel that contains poison, instead of living water, which alone can refresh and comfort you. Let expediency kindle its light—let policy light its taper—let literature shine with its glow-worm ray—let science present its dusky light—none of these must supersede the sun, or be received for one moment as substitutes for its glorious light. On the other hand, let ministers of the gospel see that they radiate all the light: let them take care lest they become prisms and not stars; for if the light be split into parts, we have not pure light; we have yellow, and blue, and green, and it will only mislead and bewilder. Let every minister of the gospel see then that he does not always dwell upon one truth—on election, for instance, which is one ray of light, and a very bright one, but only one. If you preach only election, you are like the prism, giving only portions of the light, and not the whole light; a part of the gospel, not the whole gospel: or if a minister overstate man's free will, that is, unduly magnify man's

responsibility, he is giving only another rainbow colour, not the pure light—a portion only of the true light. Let him present the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man, Christ as our righteousness, the law as our standard, justification by Christ alone, and sanctification by the Spirit alone; God the Father electing Love, God the Son redeeming Love, God the Spirit sanctifying Love; the Bible without a clasp—the cross without a screen—the way to heaven without an obstruction, and he will then be a true star, reflecting the pure light of that Sun which shall soon culminate on his glorious throne, and in whose clear light we shall all see clearly.

This beautiful figure employed by the seer in the Apocalypse is in perfect harmony with similiar figures used in his personal ministry by our blessed Lord. Thus he said to his disciples, “Ye are the lights of the world.” Were I speaking to a skeptic, I would say, “Here you see an apparently poor, despised, homeless, houseless, penniless wanderer, standing in Palestine, with the shadow of that most glorious temple falling beside him, and the associations of a thousand years rushing rapidly past him; on the one side, Greece, with all its philosophy, and its schools, and its magnificent literature, and its glorious statuary, and its matchless painting; and on the other side, Rome, with its soldiers that knew not what fear was, and its orators, and its historians, and its poets; and in the midst of all this, you hear one with no beauty that man could appreciate, telling a few fishermen of Galilee, ‘Ye are the lights of the world.’ Either he that said so must have been a maniac, or he must have been God. There could be no medium; no man in the exercise of his sober judgement would have dared to give utterance to such an expression but He who saw what light is, and was himself the light, and made his apostles the stars and the radiators of that light, and saw from afar that day when it would envelope all creation. He said truly—and successive generations rise from their tombs to attest it—‘Ye are the lights of the world.’” You philosophers, you scientific men, you universities of Greece, you orators, you poets, you statesmen—you are but the meteors, the *ignes fatui* of the world; you fishermen of Galilee, because you are lightened with the true light, “you are the lights of the world.” Kings do but darken, philosophers do but pervert,

poets do but betray; Christians, wherever they are, and they alone, radiate that light. Let us pray that we may simply radiate the light of Christ upon the world—that, whether we preach, or whether we teach, or whether we live in the world, we may not let our prejudices or passions make the impression that shall live longest, behind us. Let the light of Christ alone leave its impress upon the world through which we have passed.

What is the great truth which that light reveals? If there be one truth or aphorism that it reveals more vividly than another it is this, "Sinners ruined by nature, restored by grace." Let this light shine on every English mountain-top—let it sparkle upon every deck that sails or sleeps on the bosom of the deep—let it shine with awful lustre on the Vatican—let it be resplendent on the tomb of the false prophet. Wherever the crucifix or the crescent are, God grant that this light shining from a thousand stars may reveal this great truth, "We are ruined by nature—we can be restored only by Christ." But these stars, the outline features of which I have endeavoured to detail, are said to be placed in a distinct and peculiar position. We read, "the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest *in my right hand*;" and the apostle, in describing the appearance of our Lord, says, that he saw him having "seven stars *in his right hand*," *i. e.* in the form of a circlet, or coronet; and this teaches us that the ministers of the gospel are in Christ's right hand. This hieroglyph is eloquent with comfort, as well as with intimations of duty. The ministers of the gospel are in Christ's right hand, and therefore they are safe. This is their protection in the world in the performance of the severest and most unpopular duty which they have to discharge. Wherever their position sends them, their whole hope of protection is in this—they are in Christ's right hand. It is very easy for us, living in a land of civil and religious liberty, to say so; but it needs, indeed, to be *realized* by those who have to "war with wild beasts," like the apostle, and to preach to the reluctant and rebellious heathen, or to the evasive and sophistical Jew, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

All ministers of the gospel, down to the humblest city missionary, depend for safety solely on this fact—that they are in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing is more easily destroyed

than ministerial character. An innuendo detracts from a minister's influence; the idle calumny of idle busy-bodies may injure a minister's usefulness. Let him ever recollect, and let those who would injure him also recollect, that this is his protection—he is “in Christ's right hand.” But this is not only the *protection* of the ministers of the gospel—it is also their strength and their sufficiency. “Who,” says an apostle, “is sufficient for these things?” The answer is—Our sufficiency is of God, and the spring and fountain of that sufficiency is the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ. This teaches us, too, that the ministers of the gospel are the *instruments* of Christ. It is the right hand that wields the sword and flings the dart; and the ministers of the gospel are in his right hand in token that they are at his bidding, and that they are to be wielded by him. This great truth should settle many disputes. You may have the votes of the people, or the voice of the crown—you may be appointed by the patron, or elected by the worshipper; consecrated by the bishop, or ordained by the presbytery; and yet lack the glory, and beauty, and perfection of a true minister. These are external things—matters on which each may have his preference; but here is the true place and the source of the appointment of the minister of the gospel—in the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ. If he occupies this place, all the rest is circumstantial; this is essential and indispensable.

And lastly, these seven stars are said to be in Christ's right hand to denote their perfect equality. You are aware that the discipline held by the Church of Scotland, as well as by several bodies that have seceded from her is, that all ministers are perfectly equal—that the church is governed by the presbytery and that they are all presbyters. We are sometimes charged with having no bishops; we have in the Church of Scotland some twelve or thirteen hundred bishops. The fact is, we are all bishops in Scotland, like those of Ephesus; but so much are we the creatures of circumstance, that we think there cannot be a bishop unless he has very many thousands a-year. I believe the time is coming when some bishops, at least, must do with less. I am certain that a time is near when nothing but a thorough reformation of abuses can save the most precious institutions that we have; and it is a friend, not a foe, that

says so. I am no revolutionist : I have no sympathy with those who would destroy ; but of this I am thoroughly convinced—that we live in a new age, when new tests, and new analyses, and new ordeals are demanded. An educated people, a thinking people, a searching people are rising on every side ; and they that possess power will have to wield it in love, and they that hug abuses that are dear to them, will find they sit upon a volcano which may explode at a moment's notice.

I ought, however, to correct or explain what I have said. I do not mean that it is wrong for bishops or any other men to be wealthy ; I think there is a great deal of unjust prejudice on this subject. Some people say ministers ought not to be rich ; perhaps it is best for them that they should not be so ; but it is quite plain that if wealth be sin in a minister, it cannot be less so in a layman. If a minister is likely to abuse his money, a lawyer, or physician, or merchant is not less likely to abuse his, and therefore the danger is quite as great in a layman having it as in a minister having it ; and when it is urged that the *first ministers* of the gospel had nothing, I must reply, The *first Christians* brought their all, and laid it at the ministers' feet ; so that when we speak of what is wrong in the one direction, we may also speak of what is wrong in the opposite. The pulpit, like Him who inspires it, must have no respect of persons. God grant that this may long be so !

The next symbol to which I refer in this passage is, "The seven golden candlesticks are seven churches." "The seven stars," we have seen, "are the seven angels ;" "the seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches." The church is here represented by a candlestick. This is not a figure which I adopt, but a figure that is sanctioned and adopted by the Holy Spirit of God. Now, what is the great object of a candlestick ? To hold a light. It matters not how exquisite the chasing of the silver may be, or how precious the gold of which it is made : you may prefer a candlestick of a particular material, or of a peculiar form ; but it is plain that if you have received, on some dark winter evening, a letter from some dear, but distant relative, of whom you are anxious to hear all that is good and happy, you would prefer to a golden candlestick without a candle upon it, a wooden one, with a bright and clear light upon it. So it is with a church : some of you would prefer

the Church of England, which I will call, if you please, the golden candlestick; but I am sure that you would prefer, if you are Christians indeed, the humblest Methodist meeting-house, with the light of Life perpetually shining in it, to the most magnificent cathedral, with an archbishop in its pulpit, who neither is, nor has light.

In the next place, we judge of the excellence of a candlestick by its fitness for the object to which it is destined. We do not say that is the best candlestick which is made of gold or silver. It may be made of gold, but incapable of standing on the table alone; or it may have no place in which a candle may be firmly placed: it cannot then answer your purpose; or it may not hold the light high enough for you to see by it. What you require is the one that stands steadiest, remains firmest, holds the light highest, and grasps that light the most firmly. In other words, we judge of the thing by the completeness with which it answers the end for which that thing was made. So must we judge of a church. That is the best church that does best the church's duty—that is the best pulpit, whatever it be made of, that holds the most faithful minister—that is the best minister, who gives you the greatest light, interests your mind the most deeply, touches your heart the most powerfully, and conveys knowledge most truly. You judge of the minister by the completeness with which he does his work; and if men would carry this common-sense criterion into the church, as they do carry it into the shop, the counting-house, the place of business, I am quite sure there would be less Puseyism, and still less Popery found in the visible church. And this leads us to another very important truth. Our Lord said, "Men do not light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but they put it on a candlestick, and it gives light to the whole house." Now when the rites and ceremonies of the church are so multiplied that they darken or conceal the light of the church, it is lighting a candle, and putting it under a bushel—when the prayer offered by the minister, or in the ritual or the liturgy, is so eloquent in language that it attracts the attention to its words, instead of the heart to its meaning, this is placing the candle under a bushel—when the place of worship is so intricate in the furniture with which it is adorned, that the people think only of the work, and think

nothing of the object for which it was intended, then the candlestick is put under a bushel—or when the building is so constructed that the possibility of the people hearing or seeing the minister, is sacrificed to the necessity of making the whole Roman, or Gothic or Norman, or in any other style of architecture—and when the practical use of a church is made subordinate to its decorations, then the candle is put under a bushel. Or when the Bible is written in Latin, or in Greek, and presented to the people untranslated—or when the print is so small, and the paper so bad, that, however cheap its price, the people can make no use of it, then the candle is put under a bushel.

The grand and noble law of the Christian economy is, “Every thing done for edification;” and in proportion as it fails to conduce to edification, the candle is concealed by the bushel that is placed above it; but when every thing—the preaching of the minister, the liturgy, the worship, the singing, the praying, are looked upon as means to an end, and every thing is subordinated to the edification of the people—then, I say, every thing is in its place, and all is as it should be. I do not mean to teach, by any thing I have said, that churches should be ugly or bald. So much has this been the case in some churches, and so much was it the case in this church before it was repaired, altered, and enlarged, that to sit in the Scotch church was said by some to be “equivalent to doing penance in the Roman.” This is by no means my preference. If our houses are made tasteful and convenient, surely the house of God ought to be so too. There should be nothing symbolic in it—this is the essence of Popery—but every thing in it conducive to the object for which it was designed, and to the edification of those that hear;—this is scriptural and Protestant Christianity.

The light by which the candle in the ancient temple was lighted was taken from the flame that was originally kindled from heaven—the light that lights the minister must be from the Fountain of Light—the light that he gives us, as I have shown you, must be from the sun alone.

Again, the candle in the ancient temple was fed by holy oil, and oil which it was alike a crime—blasphemy to attempt to imitate. The unction that the minister of the gospel should

have, is the unction of the Holy One. If the minister's light is the reflection of Christ, his light and life ought to be fed by the Holy Spirit of God. And what is true of the minister is no less true of the people; their light should be from the sun; their holiness, their love, their grace, from the Spirit of God. And just in proportion as a nation has faithful ministers, and holy people, and devoted Christians, and increasing numbers of them, in the same proportion will that nation be peaceful, and prosperous, and happy. We have much evidence of this fact: it is where Christianity has had the greatest influence, that the people have risen to the highest pitch in all that elevates, ennobles, and adorns a nation. And it will be found that where Christianity has perished, there literature, and poetry, and arts, and legislation have perished too. Science, in the hands of Infidelity, becomes mere materialism; poetry, in the power of Infidelity, degenerates into sensualism; and nations without Christianity become poor, and miserable, and blind, and wretched indeed. Even where Christianity, when it is predominant, is not valued by literary men, you will notice that they dare say little against it. It is only the wretched, paltry Sunday newspapers, that come out, like the moles and the bats, in the darkness of the night, to do mischief, and retire on the approach of day, that can afford to point their foolish jests at the gospel, and make jokes at the expense of the Bible. The first and ablest papers, magazines, and reviews, whatever be their deficiencies in many Christian elements, and even Christian expression—and they are, many of them, deficient in these—yet will not, ay, and dare not, directly attack the gospel, or seek to undermine that blessed Book, which has for its author God, and for its end the salvation of the chiefest of sinners. The light of the gospel is the light of the world; and in proportion as that sun shall rise higher above the horizon, all literature, all science, all philosophy, all poetry, will become consecrated, and pure, and holy also.

Let me notice one other feature in the Jewish economy. The candlestick was put in the place where the priests were, and only in that place. It had seven branches, but only one stem. In the gospel church here delineated there are seven stems,

and each stem has seven branches. The great lesson to be taught was, that in the Jewish church, Christianity was confined to a place, or a nation—that the light was placed where alone it could burn, in holy, consecrated ground. Beyond, all was darkness, and blankness, and coldness; but in the Christian dispensation all ground is holy. Never forget that in the Christian dispensation there is no holy place like that of the ancient temple, or that in which the candlestick stood; but that all ground is holy. And this reminds me of what is the secret of the introduction, in the Diocese of Exeter, of stone altars, and oratories, and crucifixes. All this is designed to introduce the thin edge of the wedge, which has been blessed by Pius IX., and with which he hopes to rend our Protestant country into a thousand pieces. I allude to these matters, because faithfulness requires that I should do so. What was called an “oratory” was erected in a domestic establishment, with an altar in it, and a cross upon the altar, with other paraphernalia of Rome; and bishop and clergy coincided that it was proper that there should be such a place in every house, for family worship. I deny this; the kitchen floor, the dining-room floor, the drawing-room carpet, are all holy ground, if holy hearts bow their knees upon them. When my Lord allied himself to a portion of the dust, he consecrated every acre by that act; he requires only holy hearts to pray and holy tongues to confess, and all the earth on which there is such worship is holy ground; and to attempt to make a vital distinction, and especially to attempt to carry such a distinction into our domestic worship, is to throw back Christianity into Judaism, and Protestantism itself into Popery. However beautiful churches and temples may be, they are not the body; the true church is made up of living stones; and this reminds me of a passage which I wish you specially to notice; it is in Luke xxi. 5: “And as some” (*i. e.* the apostles) “spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” When the disciples went into the temple, what was it that first caught their eye? Just that which captivated the man and the Jew—the man praising the seen, and despising the unseen; the Jew admir-

ing the splendid material worship, caring little about the spiritual—the temple appearing to them so great, simply because their minds and hearts were so little; but if the apostles saw something and such as I have described, in the temple to admire, we read that our Lord found something in it to admire also. Christ, the Lord of glory, found in the temple an object that attracted his notice; and the disciples also found an object which attracted theirs. We have seen what the apostles saw and wondered at—the glorious architecture, the lofty pillars, and clustering capitals, and beautiful ornaments—these were that charmed and captivated them. But what did Christ see? Read the beginning of the chapter, and you will find there what caught his eye. Jesus looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, “Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.” The disciples saw the splendid stones—Christ saw nothing there but that humble, despised, and holy widow. And what did he see in her? He saw in that widow’s soul a sanctuary more glorious than the temple of Jerusalem; and in that widow’s offering a sacrifice more precious than a thousand rams, and bulls, and goats; and in that woman a living stone more splendid and enduring than all the clustering columns, and vast arches, and fretted ceilings of the temple of Jerusalem; so truly does moral excel material glory. The Jew, the disciple, the man, saw nothing but splendid architecture; the Lord Jesus was blind and indifferent to it all, and saw nothing but a poor widow casting her mites into the treasury. It is not the consecrated stone, but the holy chancel of the holy heart of the living stone; based upon the true foundation, the head Corner-stone. And wherever that widow cast in her mite and worshipped, there Christ could see a holy temple and holy ground.

We see in the next place in this candlestick many branches, forming one candlestick; denoting, that in the Christian church there should be unity of doctrine, but, it may be, diversity of

discipline ; unity of principle, variety of development. But I hasten to urge one or two inferences.

First, we see what the normal and radical idea of the church of Christ is. It is just wherever Christ is. We have Christ walking in the midst of these candlesticks, given as the great idea of what constitutes the essential element of the true church of Christ. "Whosoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And this doctrine is the rule now, just as much as it was then : wherever Christ is walking, that is, is present, in the midst of the golden candlesticks—the place may be a prison—the number may be two—the cathedral beautiful—but it is a true church. A large audience is delightful, but the church is not confined to a numerous congregation. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." They need not meet at Loretto, or at Compostella, or at Rome, or in the oratory at Exeter ; whosoever they are met in the name of Christ, to read his word, and do his will, and lean upon his intercession and sacrifice, and pray for his blessing, and celebrate his praise, there you have the essence of a church.

Secondly, you have here the unity of the true church—Christ in the midst of the candlesticks—one light from the holy altar kindling them—one oil, the unction of the Holy One, feeding them—one Lord and High-Priest walking in the midst of them. Union to Christ is the essence of unity, and in the absence of this, all else is but the semblance and the form.

We have next the purity of the church. Discipline may be useful, but the great source of its unity is its realizing the presence, and hearing the voice of the Lord Jesus walking in the midst of it.

Here, too, we have the safety of the true church—not multitude, or rank, or wealth, but Christ himself in the midst of it. And, finally, you see here the glory of the true church—Christ, the light of the world, walking in the midst of it. May Christ walk in the midst of us ! may he make this congregation a candlestick indeed ! and may he make me, and all the ministers who speak to you from this place, stars in his right hand ! May it be your prayer in your homes, the aspiration of your

hearts, that Christ would be present here ; and then, whether it be rich or poor, learned or ignorant, we have a presence that is a substitute for all, when all these are gone ; and which supersedes by its splendour and its glory all, when all these are present ; and which will never fail us nor forsake us, until the light of this dusky twilight is lost in the noonday splendour of the millennial morn, when there shall be neither stars nor candlesticks, but the great and overflowing sea of overwhelming light, and in that clear light all will see Christ, and each other, clearly.

LECTURE V.

THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS—HER EXCELLENCY.

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.”
—REV. ii. 1–3.

It must be apparent to the most casual reader of the whole beautiful address to the church of Ephesus, that it naturally divides itself into three sections; the first section containing an eulogium or panegyric upon the excellence that was seen by Christ in the Ephesian church; the second section containing his rebuke, in which he points out the sins and deficiencies by which that church was stained; and the third recording the beautiful promise, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life.”

In this lecture, in reliance on the grace and Spirit of God, who has promised to teach speaker and hearer “all the truth,” I will direct your attention to the first division; viz. the excellence which the great Chief Bishop of the Church saw, and approved, and applauded in the Ephesian church. Last Lord’s-day evening I showed you why ministers are called stars. They are placed in the firmament—a place conspicuous and eminent; they are simply and solely for the purpose of illuminating the darkness of the night in the absence of the sun. The minister who does not shine, and whose sermons do not reflect light, is a minister whom men may have made, but whom God has not consecrated. I showed you, in the next place, that churches are likened to candlesticks, because they are constituted for the purpose of holding up the light; and I put it to the common sense of every man to determine what

is the best church. One would prefer a candlestick of gold, exquisitely chased, of great weight, and great value; but if a letter comes from a dear and distant relative, and it reaches us in the darkness of the night, and our hearts beat with anxiety to peruse it, we shall prefer a bright light upon a wooden candlestick, to no light at all upon a gold or silver one. By all means prefer the golden candlestick, but insist that there shall be light in it. Some of you may think the Church of England the golden candlestick, and the Church of Scotland the wooden one, if you like; others may think, as some do think, that it is no candlestick at all; but you are to judge of it, not by what men say, but by the light that it distributes; and, depend upon it, that the church that gives the most light is the church that does its mission best; and whether it be gold, or silver, or lead, or wood, or stone, this is the material thing—this the essential thing—that it shall hold forth a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path.

I noticed next this beautiful fact, that the Lord walks in the midst of the candlesticks; in other words, that “whosoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” I have often referred you to that passage; it contains the essence of a church; it is the root and pith of a church; all else, in my humble judgment—be it Independency, Presbytery, or Episcopacy—is more or less human and convenient developments of the one great essential element of a church; viz. Christ in the midst of two or three met in his name, it matters not where. Man makes much of place, and attaches great veneration to places; God attaches none. That man is destitute of taste who does not admire the noble cathedral, that seems to be the very stone of the earth bursting upward into blossom, and sending its new and sacred fragrance, like holy aspirations, to the skies; but that man is destitute of Christianity, who says there is no church outside it. I showed you, too, a very striking instance in illustration of this, namely, in the Gospel of St. Luke, where we read that when our Lord and his disciples met in the beautiful temple that was raised by Herod, they looked around them in that temple, and the disciples saw one thing, the Lord of glory saw another thing. Both the Master and his disciples, both Christ and the apostles, admired and applauded something, and each the

thing that each thought most beautiful. What did the disciples think most beautiful? They said, "Behold what manner of stones these are! what exquisite architecture! what a triumph of genius! what a glorious edifice! Look, Master, and see what a beautiful temple we and our fathers have worshipped in!" That was the object of their admiration. But what did Jesus take notice of? He said, "These stones are but chiselled dust; not one stone shall be left upon another. They seem so great to you, because you are so little. I see a more sublime spectacle by far—a poor widow woman coming in, casting in a mite into the treasury." Jesus was so charmed with the glory of that moral spectacle, that he was blind to the splendours of the architectural one. The disciples admired the dead stones piled by the hand of the architect; the disciples' Lord admired only the widow casting a mite into the treasury. The former were dead stones—the latter was a living stone. The former were beautiful apparently—the latter was beautiful indeed; and the contrast teaches us, that it is the moral that lights up the physical, not the physical that can add any lustre to the moral.

I now pass to the substance of the epistle addressed to the church at Ephesus. You will notice that Christ introduced himself in each of these epistles to the seven churches with some of those attributes in which he was disclosed in the opening chapter. We have one of these attributes in the preface to each epistle—that one of the Lord's sublime attributes being selected which is most appropriate to the peculiar moral and spiritual state of the community which is addressed.

In order that we may know something of the origin and history of the church of Ephesus, let us turn to those passages of Scripture which give us an account of it. We have, first, the historical account of the church of Ephesus in the Acts of the Apostles; secondly, an apostle's epistle to the church of Ephesus, called the Epistle to the Ephesians; and thirdly, the autograph letter of Christ himself to that church—this epistle in the first person sent by our Lord himself.

I turn, first of all, to Acts xix., where we find a sketch in brief of the introduction of the gospel at Ephesus. We there read that Paul, having passed through the upper coast, came to Ephesus,

and he found there certain disciples who had escaped from their own country and fled to Ephesus. We read in verse 6, that they "spake with tongues, and prophesied, after that the Holy Ghost came upon them by the laying on of the hands of Paul; and all the men were about twelve." We next find (verse 8) the apostle going into the synagogue of the Jews—preaching always first to the Jews, and next to the Gentiles—thus setting us an example of missionary order and action; the Jew first, and then the Gentile; and I believe that God will bless that order. Let the one be done, and let not the other be left undone.

We find next (verse 9) that the only chapel which the apostle first officiated in at Ephesus was a school-master's school: "He went daily and disputed in the school of one Tyrannus"—a portion of apostolic conduct which I am surprised that those who are the uncompromising advocates of what is called apostolic succession do not imitate. The apostles preached anywhere and everywhere; the great question with them was, "Are there ears to hear, and hearts to be converted?" And if they saw that there were both, there they preached the unsearchable riches of Christ. Sure I am, that we shall not reach the full perfection of true apostolic succession, till we witness bishops and archbishops lending new lustre to their lawn, and new dignity to their position, by standing in Smithfield, or Paul's Cross, Farringdon Market, and Covent Garden, and preaching as good Bishop Latimer and Bishop Ridley did, and a greater bishop than either, St. Paul did; and a greater than all—the Lord of glory did—the everlasting gospel of the grace of Christ to all that will wait and listen. The apostle, it is said, "disputed." I wish you to notice the language here, "He disputed and persuaded." Many persons are extremely opposed to controversy. If by controversy you understand calling nicknames, losing one's temper, attributing to an opponent what he repudiates and disclaims, such controversy is alike unchristian and worthless, if not mischievous; but I understand by controversy, speaking the truth, but speaking it in love; strong arguments couched in persuasive and affectionate terms. Tender, in our address to the man, bold and unsparing in our denunciation of his errors; denouncing the *deeds* of the Nicolaitanes, and yet loving, and trying to save the *souls* of the Nicolaitanes—this is

controversy, and such is the controversy that is scriptural. Certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, who took upon themselves to call the name of Jesus over evil spirits—having been convinced of their error, and “having brought their books, burned them before all men; and they counted the price of the books, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.” I refer to this text because the use made of it proves that popes are not infallible in their interpretation of Scripture. The predecessor of the present pope was Gregory XVI. This Gregory wrote a Latin letter to all the Roman Catholic bishops of Christendom: in this letter he says that when the apostle Paul preached at Ephesus, the magicians brought their books, and the apostle took their books and burned them; and thus he proves the propriety of an Index Expurgatorius, *i. e.* a list drawn up by the popes of Rome, in which they blackball every book that does not please them, or pick out certain sentences which they denounce as heretical in books which, on the whole, they approve. It has occasionally happened, through the blessing of God, that the very extracts which they have marked as heretical, and put in the Index, have caught the eyes of priests, and been blessed to the enlightening of their minds, and the saving of their souls. Gregory XVI. then brings this text to prove that bishops may burn books they disapprove, or put them in the Index: but, in fact, the apostles did not take the books and burn them; and to quote the apostles as doing so, is to misquote Scripture; for it is plainly said that the magicians themselves brought the books and burned them. If popes be infallible in enunciating doctrine, certainly they are not infallible in quoting texts to prove it. “When the word of God mightily grew and prevailed,” and afterward one Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines for Diana, saw that his occupation was in danger, he called together the workmen, and said, “Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth,” &c., addressing them in the most plausible and artful manner. Wherever God has a work, Satan always gets up a counter-work; wherever, in a congregation, God’s truth is prevailing, there is sure to spring up in it something that will damage or dilute it. You never hear of there being genuine coin circulating in the realm, without forged coin instantly following it; and the forged coin is the evidence of the prior existence of the ge-

nuine. This Demetrius was an avaricious, shrewd, and worldly silversmith. He gilded over his avarice with religion, and pretended to be zealous for the faith, while he was enthusiastic for the filling of his pocket: he was one of those men who make godliness to be gain, and with words the most plausible, (for no man wants eloquence when he is thoroughly sincere in seeking the object which he pleads for,)—I would say, the most eloquent language, for it was admirably adapted to the craftsmen's love of money, and their liking for superstition—he told them, “You see we get our living by making these shrines”—that was the avaricious appeal—“and in the next place, who knows not that the great goddess Diana is admired all over the world? and if this Paul is suffered to go on preaching this new doctrine, her worship will be neglected, her shrines will not be wanted, and our trade will be ruined. This will never do; we must put it down at all hazards.” This touched their superstition.

This explains much of the persecution that has existed in the world. A man who loves the truth, and desires only its spread, will never persecute, either to maintain or promote it; but one who has some selfish and sinister end to advance—who uses religion merely as the plausible cover under which he hopes to promote it with greater success—is always ready, if needs be, to persecute, in order to help himself. And yet, what a blunder persecution is! It failed signally at Ephesus, as it has failed everywhere; for we read that the result of the conflict was the establishment of a church, the largest of the seven, and the utter discomfiture of Demetrius and his craftsmen, his goddess, and all her shrines. Persecution never built up the truth—it never pulled down a lie; and wherever the secular arm is called in, in order to put down truth or to build up a lie, it fails in its attempt, and parts with its strength. All the the legislation in the world cannot permanently build up a lie: all the inquisitors in the world are not able to burn out God's truth. God is the guardian of the truth; and it will rise from its sorest struggles, radiant with more terrible beauty, and give augury of surer triumph.

After these scenes had passed away, the apostle called together (chap. xx.) the elders of the Ephesian church; for at verse 17 we read, “And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the

elders of the church." It is right to mention that the word elders is the translation of the word *πρεσβυτέρους*, the presbyters of the church; and in verse 28, the apostle says to these presbyters, "Take heed to yourselves, and to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers," (*ἐπισκόπους*;) that is the only word that I know in the whole of our admirable translation of the Bible, in which a royal hand and party influence is understood to be traced. James VI. of Scotland was on the Scottish throne the most zealous of all zealous Presbyterians; but when he crossed the Tweed, like many of his countrymen in the present day, he became the most zealous of all zealous Episcopalians; so still, ultra-Tractarians are generally converts from Presbytery or Independency, or the sons of those who remain so. So afraid was James lest there should be any thing against the favourite policy of his adoption, that he induced the translators, it is said, to render the word *ἐπισκόποι*, usually translated bishops, into "overseers;" because he felt that those who are plainly called presbyters in one verse, are as plainly called bishops in another verse; and if the words were exactly and literally translated, people might say, "Bishops and presbyters are the same thing; and bishops should preach, should have flocks under their charge, and do the work of ministers," and thus his favourite polity might suffer. The word was therefore rendered "overseer" in this place, while it is translated bishop in every other part of the New Testament. I only wish the word "bishop" had not been retained at all, and that the word "overseer," or "superintendent," had been used instead; it would more directly have expressed what is the office of a bishop—not a man to "overlook" his work, but a man to "oversee" it; not to neglect it, but to superintend it.

Perhaps this shows that whoever be the angel of the church at Ephesus, he was not a bishop in the modern sense of the word, because there were many bishops, with many flocks. The apostle says so: "Whom the Holy Ghost hath made *bishops*" or overseers; and therefore it appears to me that the angel may be either the representative of the whole, or may have been what we call the moderator, or presiding minister; but at all events the address is plainly not to the minister, as such, but to the whole Christian church, properly and strictly so called. It has been said by an-

cient writers that Timothy was the first bishop of Ephesus, and they have argued from these words, "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." I, for one, entertain no objection to that form of church government. I believe that the earliest form of ecclesiastical polity after the apostles' days, was a very modified episcopacy; but such an episcopacy as we have probably no specimen of now among the churches. To give you an instance of an ancient bishop, I would name Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage. When you hear of a bishop you think of one who has ten or twenty thousand a year, living in great splendour, with two or three hundred presbyters under him, and a seat in the legislature. Cyprian had very few presbyters under him; his whole diocese was within four walls of a chapel or meeting-house; and these few presbyters he sent abroad to preach the gospel of Christ. Such an episcopacy is extremely beautiful; and would, if it were preserved, be eminently effective. I do not quarrel with existing developments, or the munificent support of modern episcopacy: I only wish to show that the earliest form of ecclesiastical polity was something like what Archbishop Leighton wished to see—a very reduced episcopacy, and so like presbytery as to be scarcely distinguishable from it. The angel of the church of Ephesus is thus addressed as the representative of the whole church, as may be seen from the body of the epistle; it is the church that Christ rebukes, and exhorts, through him—"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, &c.; to him that overcometh," (whosoever he be,) "will I give to eat of the tree of life;" plainly implying that the address is meant for the laity, not for the clergy only.

The next question that arises is, What was this church? Plainly it was not a company exclusively of elect, or justified persons: this is the true, the inner, the spiritual church; but it was, I apprehend, a mixed body; and if we keep the distinction between these two things clearly before us, we shall avoid many misapprehensions into which persons fall: it is baptism that constitutes admission into the outward and visible church—it is regeneration that constitutes admission into the true and spiritual church. The first is made up of the whole company of them who profess the gospel,

represented as tares and wheat, good and bad fishes; those that are Israelites indeed, and those that are Israelites only in name; those that are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy, and without blemish before him in love; and those who profess, but feel not the power of the truth: so that we have reason to believe, from the parables and other portions of Scripture, that in this dispensation there will be no such thing as a perfectly pure communion-table, church, or congregation, either local or national, or catholic and universal. In speaking with a goldsmith one day, he showed me what is called virgin gold, and said it is utterly worthless in one sense, while it is most precious in another; it cannot be used in its pure state for manufacture—there must be an alloy in it to make it work; it must be eighteen or twenty carats fine, it cannot be twenty-four, *i. e.* some sort of alloy must be mixed with it. Visible churches, like ordinary gold, are some ten, some twelve, some eighteen carats fine; the pure church is the pure unalloyed gold, and has currency only in the realms of glory: in this world the church has an alloy; there is a mixture of mere professors with true believers; nothing absolutely pure is here, and I believe, so impure are we, and we live in so impure a world, that there needs to be a mixture in order to exist at all. But a day comes, when all the base metal shall be destroyed, and the pure gold shall come out beautiful, and unmixed, and holy; and its currency shall be where there is no need nor toleration of alloy—where is nothing to defile or destroy. But this church, while thus a mixed body, was yet perfectly distinct from the world: it had its own place of meeting, its own rites, its own laws, its preaching of the gospel, its sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, and several outward signs and forms by which its numbers were known to the world. Our Lord left the church but one grand characteristic badge: one church said it should be a tonsure on the head; another church said it should be a crucifix; another, something else: Christ left us no such badge; he said Christians should have a badge, but not such as these—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Reciprocal, mutual love, is the apostolic characteristic of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The author of this epistle is Christ himself. The church of

Ephesus is the party addressed, the writer of the letter is the Lord Jesus Christ. That church might have expected a missive of judgment, and lo! it is a missive of mercy, a letter of love, the autograph of her Head, her Lord, and Saviour. He says to John, "Write; be my amanuensis; mingle with it no sentiment of your own, but convey my words as they fall from my lips, to the church at Ephesus:" tradition might be distorted; oral communications might be mistaken; but this is a letter to be read in the light of the nineteenth, as well as to be studied amid the persecutions of the first century.

He pronounces first a panegyric upon what was good in this church: he says, "I know thy works." Christ is God: omniscience is his glorious prerogative and attribute: he only can say, "I know thy works;"—"he had eyes like a flame of fire." He did not need that any man should tell him what was in man; "his eyes behold the works, his eyelids try the thoughts of the children of men;" "all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Only think, that there is not one beating heart in this assembly, upon which the eye of Christ is not as distinctly riveted, as if that heart were the only one in the whole universe of God. In other words, each individual in this assembly may say at this moment, "There is not a thought in my heart, but, lo! O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." What is the thought that is now uppermost? I doubt not many a one is feeling at this moment that, while I am speaking, his thoughts are wandering to the ends of the earth. Some have their bodies here, and their hearts in their counting-house; others, looking to me, and listening to my words, have their fancies roaming here, there, and everywhere; some thinking so little about the purpose for which they have come here, that they are now wondering, and calculating, while I speak, whether they shall obtain that little payment to-morrow, or get through that little difficulty next year. What a pity that it is so! not only what a *sin*, but what a *pity* that it is so! My dear friends, you ought to determine that nothing that belongs to the counting-house, the trade, the business, the profession, shall trespass on this holy day, to disturb its quiet, or to mar your communion with God. Get into the holy habit of sequestering Sabbath from the rest of the days, and

you will soon find that the habit will become, by the blessing of God, like a second nature. Let us ever recollect this *solemn* truth, that Christ's eye is upon each one of us. There is no such thing as a divine "absenteeism;" there is no such thing as a suspension, even for a moment, of the penetrating and piercing omniscience of God. That deed that you did in secret sounds like the seven thunders in God's ear; that thought which flashed through your soul with the speed of the lightning's wing, left its shadow before God, and in his records it is written what it was, and what its character is. But, blessed be his name, his omniscience does not occupy itself with looking only at our sins, but it delights also to take cognizance of our virtues which he himself has created. That prayer that is scarcely expressed by the lips, but that leaps secretly from the heart, Christ hears. That sympathy within, for which you have no expression without, Christ sees. That pity which you felt for a poor one whom you could not help, Christ has noted as true charity. That mite which you cast into the treasury with your left hand, your right hand scarcely knowing what your left hand did, Christ has seen. There is not a silent tear that is shed over sin and sorrow, nor a secret thought or prayer that is breathed for its extinction, that does not rise with greater speed than an angel's wing, and soar higher than an archangel's flight, and reach the bosom, and lie recorded by the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be his name! when he sees what is sin in his people, he notes it to forgive it; when he detects what is excellence, he notes it to record, to canonize, and to remember it. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." How beautiful is this! Believer, how consolatory is this! the act that the world misconstrues, the word that the world misrepresents, you have a judge that sees actually as it is. Hopes too bright for this world, and sympathies with what is too lofty or too pure for the crowd to comprehend, Christ sees. What the world denounces as your sin, Christ records, it may be, as your excel-

lence : there is not a holy thought that is cherished, or a cup of cold water that is given in his name, which he does not appreciate. Child of God ! “ I know thy works ; ” I know the difficulties with which you have to contend, I know the obstructions which you have to overcome ; I know the motives from which they spring, I know the end for which you do them ; and if the world’s eulogium shall not be pronounced upon you, you have an eulogium in reversion, that will be music indeed, when the world’s shout will be silent forever. If this be true of their deeds, it is true of believers themselves. Wherever there is a child of God, there rests upon him the eye of his blessed Lord. Let him be in the deepest coal-pit of Northumberland, or upon the loftiest crag of the Pyrenees—in some subterranean crypt or secret catacomb—in the region where the sun never shines, or in some desert scorched by his burning rays—let him be shut up in the cells of the Inquisition, or, like the Waldenses of old, amid the ravines of the Cottian Alps—wheresoever the sword of persecution may drive him, or the wave of prosperity may lift him, the believer is seen, and overshadowed, and protected by his Lord, and kept as carefully as if he were the only jewel in the universe, and his Master’s name impressed and engraven upon it. “ Happy are the people that are in such a case ! happy is that man whose God is the Lord ! ” But let us inquire if this be our privilege—if this inspection be our joy—if it be true that Christ knows our thoughts, our feelings, our works—what are those works of ours that he knows ? You complain, that I so often ask you to give, and to give so much, and so often, for various objects ; just ask yourself what you have given and done for Christ—what your works are ! If Christ be looking on, if he see and record all you have spent in follies, in luxuries, in amusements, and all you have done for the spread of the gospel, how will it stand ? I believe that the time shortens, and the shadows of approaching night, when no man can work, come and creep over the world, and indicate that the sun is setting, but setting only to rise again in greater, even in noon-day splendour ; therefore, I believe that now or never is the time for missionary effort. We ask you, then, in assisting missionary effort, to give not only your superfluities, which is all you have given hitherto, but to make sacrifices ; what you have yet done for the cause of

Christ has been the frieze, the ornament of your life, not the pillar, the capital of it. Never was there a time when the whole world was so open to missionary effort as at this day ; and never was the time so near realization when this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to every nation, and then shall the end come. France and Spain are both at this moment open to our Bibles—Greece and Turkey are at length accessible to our missionaries. It has ceased to be a crime for a perverted Christian to come back to Christianity ; it has ceased in Turkey to be an offence to preach the gospel to Mohammedans. I told you on a previous evening that the sultan has so completely relaxed his laws, that he has given permission to the Jews to raise a temple in the midst of Jerusalem, and they are now collecting funds to build one, which they say shall eclipse the first and second, both in glory and magnificence. At this moment Asia, and Assyria, and India beyond the Indus, farther than the Macedonian phalanxes of Alexander ever penetrated, are inviting us. The mountains of India may be trodden by missionaries' feet ; China has cast down her fortresses ; Egypt and Abyssinia have opened their gates ; there is not a spot in the wide world where the missionaries of the gospel may not preach ; from every spot there comes, heard by the ear of God, and by the ear of the true Christian, the piercing cry, "Come over and help us ;" the great sea is coming on, to cover all with its waves—take the opportunity of beneficence while you can, before you are overwhelmed ; the night is at hand—work while it is called to-day ; the candle is nearly burned to the socket—make use of the little light that remains ; the shades of evening are gathering round us—ply the work of the gospel ere the sun sets, and there be no more opportunity for action.

But our blessed Lord says, "I know," not only "thy works," but "thy labour." It seems to me that "labour" specially refers to the minister, "works" to the people, because it is the very word applied by Paul to ministers : "Know those that labour among you, and are over you," those that *labour* in the word and doctrine ;" and if this refer to ministers of the gospel, what does it teach us ? that the ministry of the gospel is not non-resident, but that it is what the apostle has here called a "labour." If any pride themselves on having apostolic succession, let them see to

it that they have also apostolic doctrine, and apostolic labour. Here are the labours of an apostle: "Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Apostolic light, and apostolic love, are the things we should transfer to ourselves, and by the grace of God imitate and copy.

But the great Head of the church adds, "I know, not only thy works, and thy labour, but I know also thy patience." Patience is a virtue which, in the present day, we have much need of. "Wait patiently for God." Impatience is one of the characteristics of the day: it shows itself in prayerlessness; in feelings prejudicial to ourselves, and not beneficial to others: in a constant fear that every thing will go to wreck if we do not interpose; in a strong selfish feeling, that if we do not put in our hand, and bear our part, God will not be served, and his cause will not be sustained. Our Lord saw all that was coming on the earth, and yet what perfect self-possession! what quiet! what complete patience! Let us imitate his example. "Fret not thyself because of evil doers. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him."

And in order to exhibit and display this, realize, if you can, two or three things. He that is impatient with events which man cannot reverse is impatient with God; he that quarrels with things as they are, quarrels, as it were, with God. God is in all, overruling what is evil, sanctifying what is true. Let us stand to our post, and wait patiently till he come and relieve: thus we read in Scripture of the "patience of the saints." Yet patience does not imply indolence, for it says, "thy labour and thy patience." Is it not the fact that the man who is most self-possessed is just the man who is capable of the mightiest enterprise? How strong an illustration of this in the natural world was Columbus! When all scientific men were laughing at him, and declaring there was no such western continent as he supposed, Columbus never lost his temper, nor his energy and patience, and his persistency was

crowned with success. Take an instance from Scripture. What quietness of spirit, what endurance, what strength of character, what energy of action do we find in Joshua ! It is the men who are always impatient, always in a hurry, who do nothing ; it is the men that are quiet and self-possessed that rest and repose upon the Rock of ages, that are capable of the greatest feats, and are characterized by the most glorious triumphs.

But there are three practical or historical illustrations and evidences given of this church's labour and patience : " thou hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured." The first characteristic of these works is, that this church had tried them which say they are apostles. We learn that even in the apostles' days there were false apostles, false brethren, deceitful workers ; and if, in the sunshine of the apostles' days, there were bad men and false apostles, are we to be surprised that there are such in the present day ? As I have already said, if there were no false and bad ministers, it would be to me a proof that the Bible was not true ; and when, therefore, you hear any persons quoting bad ministers, as some are very apt to do when they want to get rid of Christianity, as a reason for rejecting the Bible, tell him that the reason which he urges for rejecting the gospel is just one of the reasons why you accept it. The Scripture says that such ministers should creep into the church ; and were such wanting, it would be evidence that the Bible is not true. There ought to be discipline in every church. I think it is wrong that a person whose conduct is openly profane, whose life is bad, whose character is equivocal, and who has not repented of his sins, should be admitted to the communion-table. That is the reason why in the Scottish church there are tokens distributed to each, that at every communion-table each person may come to the minister and elders, and receive a token that, as far as they can judge, his life is consistent, his doctrine pure, his walk becoming a believer. But how did they try them ? I doubt whether it was by an ecclesiastical court ; I believe the trial was mainly by the word of God. And this trial is exactly what the apostle speaks of when he says, " Try the spirits, whether they be of God ;" and again, when Paul says, " Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, let him be anathema," *i. e.* separate him from

you—have nothing to do with him. And this shows us that a Christian people may read the Bible; that they may understand the Bible; and that they are good judges whether it be bread or poison with which the minister feeds them.

I have received a note, complaining of a remark which I made on this passage. It is said, "Why, according to you, you encourage the people to sit as critics upon what you say;" and in this note the text is cited, "Receive the sincere milk of the word;" and the inference is added, that you ought therefore to receive what the minister says, and not judge at all. But does not the verse show that if it be any thing but milk, you are not to take it. I have no fear that there will be too much of this; my fear is rather lest you should be too dead, too apathetic, too indolent. I rejoice to stir up opposition—it is the best thing in the world. Better have men disputing with you, and controverting what you say, than seated like stones or pieces of clay, coming to God's house as a form, and leaving it just as they entered it, with increased responsibilities, but no blessing. "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and hast rejected them." No official rank, no intellectual power, must be taken as a substitute for the gospel. The instance of the patience of the church is, "Thou hast borne reproach, opposition, calumny, conflict of every sort, and had patience;" and then it is added also, "thou hast laboured for my name's sake, and hast not fainted." Mark the purity of these labours. Thou hast laboured, not for popular *éclat*, not for money, not to prop up an old sect or pull down a new one, not to strengthen one party or weaken another, but "for my name's sake," in obedience to my will, and for my glory. Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, ye have done all for my glory, leaning on my intercession, strengthened with my might, out of love to me, in testimony of your attachment to me; thus you have laboured for my name's sake.

Let us next notice the persistency of this labour: "Thou hast laboured, *and hast not fainted.*" A great fault of modern labour is, that it begins with the blaze of a rocket, and is extinguished with its speed also; it is a rare thing to find in the church a man who will begin a good work, and will quietly cleave and adhere to what he has begun. I think we Scottish Christians excel in

that point our English and Irish brethren. The Irish are the most ignitable, the English the most matter-of-fact, the Scotch the most logical and persistent. When I said I wanted money for our schools, the first five-pound note I received was from an Irish Christian; his heart leaped to its right place, as an Irishman's always does, when a right appeal on right grounds is made to it. The gospel seems to require greater force and energy in order to reach a Scotchman's heart; but when it is reached, touched, and transformed, it abides steadfast as the needle to the pole, and is the most persistent—"labouring and fainting not." It was thus that the apostles triumphed; they laboured and fainted not. It was thus that the Reformers triumphed; they laboured and fainted not. It was thus that Whitfield, and Wesley, and Oberlin, and Boos, and Elliott, and Williams, and others, of whom the world was not worthy, laboured and fainted not.

Such is Christ's eulogium on this church: such were its works, its labour, its patience, its excellence. Were the Lord of the church to visit us now, could he say to us, "Ye have done what ye could?" I fear not. Much we have done, perhaps, but not yet what we ought. Learn to make sacrifices; learn to be characterized by such virtues as will show that the gospel has made you to differ from others; to be distinguished by the excellencies of the Ephesian church, without its faults. And if there be fair and precious fruit in the midst of us, Christ's breath has given it all its fragrance—Christ's smile has given it all its beauty. If we have done aught that is good—if we have made great sacrifices—if we have laboured and have not fainted—"not unto us, O Lord, but to thy name be the praise and glory." Our sins should humble us, for they are our own; and our virtues should humble us, for they are not our own. Our sins should bring us to God, that they may be forgiven; our virtues should bring us to God, that he may be glorified.

LECTURE VI.

FIRST LOVE LOST.

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”—REV. ii. 4.

EVERY verdict pronounced on the Ephesian church previous to the fourth verse of this chapter, has been almost unmingled encomium. “I know,”—*i. e.* I fully appreciate—“thy works, thy labours, thy patience; I appreciate, too, your sympathy with truth, your hatred of error; how thou canst not bear them which are evil:—I fully appreciate your desire for a pure, evangelical, apostolic ministry—thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and hast found them liars: I know quite well how thou hast borne reproach for my sake; how thou hast despised the sneer on the one side, the scoff on the other, and the laugh from behind, and the reproach from before. I know, too, thy patience, how much thou hast patiently endured, and I know the purity of it all—it has been for my name’s sake; and I know the perseverance that has characterised it all—thou hast laboured, and hast not fainted.” But after this beautiful encomium pronounced upon the Ephesian church—pronounced by Him who knew the inmost motives of the heart, as well as knew the external comportment of every officer and person—he is constrained to say he has somewhat against her; but how kind—if I might, without irreverence, use the expression—how courteous, the rebuke that is here appended! “Notwithstanding”—I wish it were not so—I wish that faithfulness would suffer me to be silent—I wish that I could pass by without noticing the flaw by which all is injured, marred, and will be, if not corrected, ruined; but I cannot—I have somewhat against thee; and here it is—painful it is to pronounce it, but truth requires it, love necessitates it,—“thou hast

left thy first love:" the beautiful morning of the Ephesian Church, that rose in splendour and in glory, rich with brilliant promise, was overclouded before noon; the gold, so pure, became alloyed—the fine gold became changed—the wine was mixed with water; and for glory, there must be inscribed on many of its works that seemed most beautiful to the eye, and most promising to him who knew not the source from which they came, "Ichabod, Ichabod, the glory is departed." Strange it is that there should be so much to applaud, and, so soon after, so much to censure and to condemn. Yet, is not this one of the evidences that this epistle came from the same source from which all the epistles in the New Testament came? There is scarcely an apostolic Church that did not begin, soon after it was founded, to err and wander from the truth. The Corinthian Church was no sooner established by apostolic preaching, and built up by apostolic hands, than its members learned to say, one, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Cephas; and I of Apollos; and I of Christ. "Are ye not," said the Apostle, "carnal?" And again, scarcely had the Apostle left the Galatians than they began to swerve, even from the foundation itself, justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; and the Thessalonians were no sooner left than they introduced strange and extravagant views of prophecy, supposing Christ to be actually present in the midst of them, and believing in "Lo here, and lo there," instead of patiently waiting for the coming of the Lord. Now what does this teach us? That if divisions existed in the apostolic Church, then divisions existing in the Protestant Churches now do not prove that these Churches have ceased to be true ones. Our divisions may disgrace us, but, blessed be God, they do not unchurch us. The Corinthians, the Galatians, and the Thessalonians, had divisions, but these did not invalidate their claim to be true Churches; and therefore it cannot be justly laid to our charge that because we are divided in discipline we are therefore separated from Christ, and because we do not see eye to eye in things non-essential, we do not see eye to eye in things essential, eternal, vital. But let me notice, that not only did divisions take place among apostolic Churches, but—no less strange, perhaps—no sooner was the last of the Apostles removed—his spirit to the white-robed throng,

his body to the dust, in patient hope of the resurrection of the dead—than divisions sprung up in every part of the Christian world, among the Christian Churches. You are told by certain divines that the Nicene Church, *i. e.* the Church of the first 300 years before the Council of Nice, is the grand model of a Christian Church. Blessed be God that we have no such reverence for any such model. Augustine, the most evangelical and excellent of all the Fathers, states that before his day there were no less than eighty-eight sects into which the whole Christian Church was divided. Now we have not eighty-eight sects in the present day: we have many, perhaps too many, at least our enemies say so, but certainly not eighty-eight; and if the names of some of our sects are pronounced strange and uncouth by those who hate Protestant Christianity, surely some of the names of the early sects are not less so; there were the Patripassions, the Sabellarians, the Pelagians, the Marcionites, names at least as uncouth as Independents, Presbyterians, Episcopalians. But is it true that there is a Church upon earth without divisions? The Church that has most divisions, is the Church that is beginning, probably, to be most alive: the Church where there are fewest divisions may not be the Church that approximates most closely to millennial purity, but a Church that has the peace of the grave and its corruption too. But even in that communion which glories so much in her unity there are divisions: there are divisions in the bosom of the Roman Church. You are told, and told repeatedly by the advocates of that Church, "Here all is peace;" and the moment that you leave the jarring and conflicting sects of Protestantism, and come into what they call the Catholic, what we call the Romish Church, there all is peace. Have you not read of Dominicans, Franciscans, Cistercians, Benedictines, Jesuits? what are these but denominations and conflicting divisions of the Roman Catholic Church? And therefore instead of it being true that we have divisions, and that they have none, we may fairly say that they have divisions more numerous than we have; and divisions, let me say, upon far more vital points, only that we have the liberty—and avail ourselves of it—of each man worshipping under his own vine and his own fig-tree; in other words, accepting the form and polity which he prefers; while in that

Church, however they may quarrel, they are all kept together by a force and pressure *ab extra*, being bound together by certain well-known and irresistible restraints. If we refer to another party, Roman Catholic in principle, but not in name—the Tractarians—they are divided into three sects already—the Newmanites, who hold that the true faith is the development of seeds sown in the Apostles' days, that have shot up into a glorious tree, in the days of the Council of Trent: and next the Wardites, who have formed an imaginary, theoretical, transcendental Church, to which they say all others must be conformed: and lastly there are the Puseyites, who say that the Nicene Church is the great model of a Christian Church, and that perfection consists in the nearest approximation to it.

Thus, then, I have shown that there were divisions in the apostolic Churches, divisions in the Nicene Church, divisions in the Romish Church, and that there are divisions among those who have made divisions in order to escape division; and so that those who profess to do what is not to be done till the Lord of the harvest comes and does it for himself, namely, to separate the wheat from the tares in the visible Church, have only added to divisions and splits already existing. The Lord has somewhat against the best Church upon earth; there is no such thing as a pure visible Church, and such will not be till the millennium. Christ's Church has its members in every section of the visible Church;—a holy and unalloyed communion will be, for it is the grand hope of the Church, but it will not yet be. Our Lord may say of every Church—the best, the purest, the most apostolic, the most evangelical—"I have somewhat against thee;" and the most serious element in that somewhat he expresses in the text I have read—"thou hast left thy first love."

It is very remarkable, that whilst this Church was abounding in all outward efforts to extend and promote the Gospel, she should still be in a dying state in reference to that which was the spring of all Christian love. She had tried them which said they were apostles; she had laboured, she had borne, she had had patience, she had not fainted—but while all this was going on, her love was dying. The machinery moved under the influence of the original impulse, but the great moving power within was

losing its force every moment. The bark of the tree stood fair and beautiful to the eye, but the pith was mouldering, the life was nearly gone—the works were going on as before, donations and subscriptions given, prayers offered, the Sabbath kept, the church attended, but the first love had lost its fervour, and was parting with its force, and becoming colder every day. The outward body of a Church was there, the inward spirit was dying; the altar stood, but the glory was almost quenched upon it; she had a pure creed, she had a cold heart; she had light in the head, but she was losing, and had lost, rapidly, love in the heart. And this evidence of such departure, and death of love, we have strikingly exemplified in the language used by the prophet Malachi; when he shows that wherever there is a fading, dying love, there all works become weariness, all duties a burden. In Malachi, ch. i., God speaks thus to a people just in the condition of the Ephesian Church—"Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts. Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand." "Ye said also, What a weariness is it!"

All duties become weariness the moment that love to the Lord of the duty becomes cold. "And ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this at your hand? saith the Lord." Thus the prophet shows that love had grown cold in his day; and the charge of the Lord of the prophets here is, that while all these works were carried on, and carried on with vigour, the love that should make them delightful was all but gone. You who are the children of God, (known to him, and why not known to yourselves?) know well that when first your eyes were opened, and you were made to see what you yourselves were, and what Christ is,—what the law demanded—what Christ has done,—what you had lost, and what

he has recovered for you—how ardent was your gratitude! how enthusiastic your love! You thought no sacrifice too severe—no burden too heavy—no toil too hard for Christ's sake,—in order to manifest to him the love that you bore him; but is it not true that much of this has faded away? that that burning enthusiasm which was kindled when you first beheld the sun and came into contact with his beams, is now smouldering—while the smoke rather than the bright flame indicates that it is not altogether quenched? I ask of you a very solemn personal question—Is this evidence that you are dying—dying in a sense in which the body does not—departing from Christ—passing into the Aphelion—ceasing to be what you hoped you were, the children of God? It is a very delicate ground; yet I answer, you may not have the ardent and enthusiastic love of your first conversion, and still you may be more a Christian now, and more like Christ than you were then. Passion may have lost its enthusiasm by settling down into a fixed, riveted, powerful principle; it may be that by the progress of grace, and by the development of Christian character, what was passion at our first conversion, may be principle, permanent and enduring, now. The first burst of enthusiasm may have passed away—the feeling that was partly animal, partly spiritual, may have very much abated; but what you have lost in fervour you may have gained in force—what might be misconstrued as decay, may be only greater depth;—there may be less noise, because the stream, instead of being broad and sparkling in the sun, has become narrowed into a deeper channel, and rolls in greater silence, but with a flood of mightier majesty, to the main.

It may not be, then, that because you do not feel as when you were young, or as when you were first converted, that either your love to Christ, or your sympathy with his cause, or your attachment to his truth, has faded from your heart in the least degree. This, I say, is delicate ground, and one requires to tread it very carefully; though I think we never should forget that love to the Lord Jesus Christ is much more a principle than a passion. It is a principle of which it seems as if we were sometimes unconscious. What son is there here who does not love his mother? yet you do not carry abroad with you consciously and always so,

the feeling of love to your mother. But let that mother be injured—let some reproach be cast upon her—let her be in suffering, and then that which lay nestling in the heart, apparently a dead principle, collects its mighty energies, and gathers up its glorious sympathies, and that son's heart beats, and that son's strength is put forth in a strenuous effort to mitigate a mother's suffering. It may be thus with your love to Christ; what was passion once—fervid, enthusiastic, overwhelming—may now indeed be fixed and condensed into a settled principle that would look the flame, and the fagot, and the inquisitor, and prison, and martyrdom, in the face, and count all but loss for Christ Jesus' sake.

But, notwithstanding this, there is such a thing as dying spiritually; whether one who is indeed regenerated ever can cease to be so, it is now needless to discuss. I must preach from such words, for the Lord contemplates in this passage the possibility of such a state. We are told to beware of "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." There is such a thing as loss of power, as well as loss of passion. There may be a downward career when the heart becomes heavier, and the will becomes weaker, and you are precipitated downward and downward till you tremble on the very brink of everlasting destruction. Read at your leisure Jer. ii. 1—9: "Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord. Hear ye the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel: thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain? Neither said they, Where is the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt? And I brought you into a plentiful coun-

try, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination. The priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit. Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your children's children will I plead," — in all which one may see a progressive departure from what the prophet calls the love of first espousals, how beautiful it is at first, and how it may decline at last.

Let me attempt to unfold some signs by which you may know if your first love is being "left." The first evidence of dying love will be less interest in divine or religious and spiritual things than you had before. These will not occupy so much of your thoughts, nor absorb so much of your heart's affections. You will be less anxious to read the last news of missionary exertion, enterprise, and success, and more desirous to hear the last news of the last battle, or the downfall of the last capital, or the upsetting of the last throne. If your love be dying, you will be more anxious to hear of a discovery in chemistry, or of a wonderful fossil that has been dug by Dr. Buckland from the bowels of the earth, or of some new star detected by Lord Rosse's telescope, than you will be to hear of some new island in the bosom of the deep that has been rescued from heathenism, and added to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. If your love be really a dying love, you will prefer to belong to a literary society rather than to the Bible Society,—you will strive more to be a fellow of the Royal Society than to be a member of the City Mission,—and you will sacrifice and suffer more, a great deal more, to be a member of Parliament, than to be the president of a ragged school. These are evidences of preponderating earthly affinities, and I fear, in many a case, of waning and decaying spiritual love.

In the second place, if your love is dying and being left, there will be less attention to private communion with God. In the first place, it is not what you are in the pulpit, or in the pew, that shows best what you really are; it is what you are when you have shut the doors and gone into the closet, and no man can see you. — A man is really what he is when alone with God; there he knows

there is no eye looking on which he wishes to deceive — no ear listening that he wishes to captivate — nobody there whose applause, or patronage, or power he desires to conciliate. Just as you are when you are alone with God, that you are truly and really. When the Bible becomes to you a very dry, dull book, and you are glad when you have got the romance in its stead — when prayer comes to be very weariness, so that you have no delight or pleasure in it, yours is a questionable state. We are told by a very beautiful poet, “prayer is the breath of the soul;” breath is an indication of life, and whenever one ceases to breathe it needs no logic to convince you that the subject has ceased to live. “Prayer,” he says,

“ ——— is the Christian’s vital breath,
The Christian’s native air,
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.”

When you are alone with God, looking at self in his light, are you obliged to say what another poet from the depths of his own heart said?

“Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?

“What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.”

Do these lines express your experience? Perhaps they do, and yet it may be consistent with the experience of a child of God, if you can add,—

“O for a closer walk with God!
A calm and heavenly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

“Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sin that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.

"The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.

"So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame,
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb."

Is this your spirit? If so your love may have faded, but you are by the lamp that can rekindle it; your hearts may have become cold, but you are near to the altar from which a live coal may be taken wherewith to touch it.

Another instance of leaving our first love will be found in less love for the public worship of God and attendance in the sanctuary. Once you could say, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Once you were as often in your pew as there are sabbaths in the year, and not seldom on the week evenings too; but you began to give up the week-day service because you had no time—you would lose some two and a half, or three, or four, or five per cent. if you were to attend it. Once you were the delighted listener in the house of God, but now, somehow or other, headaches always happen on a Sunday, and clouds and threatening showers are visible in the sky on that day which are invisible on dividend and other week-days; and somehow or other, the way to the house of God has become so long that used to be so short; and if you have a carriage, the horses are always fatigued on Sunday, not improbably because they have been taking you from the opera at one on the Sunday morning, and from the same cause the coachman is worn out too; and so it happens by a multitude of disagreeables that you cannot get to the house of God as you used to do. Besides, the preacher's sermon is so much more dull; you desire to see more flowers in the minister's language, like poppies in a corn-field, which captivate the eye if they cannot feed the hungry—you would like more figures of speech—a few more touching and beautiful descriptions;—you do not like that plain scriptural speaking. Your position is ominous; for you do not, like new-

born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. It is worse, — your state is perilous. You are called upon to return and repent, and do the first works, and seek unto God that he may revive his work in your hearts in the midst of the years.

Another evidence of dying love, or of departing from the first love, is, when we begin to think the world and all that is in the world less evil than we used to think it. True, we read in a book that we would rather sometimes forget, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of that Father, but of the world." All this you once believed, but now you do not believe it; you think the air of the world is not so cold, after all — that it is not so uncongenial, after all. When your spiritual life decays, you begin to regret that you have been over-righteous, over-strict, and that you may without any great risk become a little more lax, and conform a little more to the world, always determined, nevertheless, to neutralize upon the Sunday the poison which you may have contracted in the week, and manage matters so skilfully and so adroitly that you shall not lose Christ's favour, and yet may have the applause and favour of the world. In short, you resolve to have a box in the playhouse and a pew in the Church — a favourite popular actor, and a favourite popular preacher, each beautiful in his place, but either execrable if he dare to step out of it and meddle with what belongs to the province of the other. In short, you would have fiction in Covent Garden and fact at Crown Court; but, alas! a day comes when the last act of the drama will close — when what was comedy will become tragedy — when the actor will be disrobed, and fiction will indeed become fact, and the realities of death, judgment, a lost soul, a rejected Saviour, a nearing eternity will remind you that the very rebukes of the preacher which gave you offence (as I know rebukes in this place have given offence on this subject) were the rebukes of a friend, who warned you in time, that you were losing your first love rapidly, losing your precious soul, and plunging into eternity without a hope, — a Saviour, — a God.

Another evidence of dying love, and one no less decisive, is latitudinarianism. When we are losing our first love, we begin to have less zeal for evangelical truth, and far greater charity, as we call it, for deadly but attractive error. We begin to think that those things which we thought in our youth, and at our first espousals, to be very dangerous heresies, are, after all, not so very bad. We come to look upon Socinianism, which is the half-way house to infidelity, as liberal Christianity; and on Puseyism, which is the half-way house to popery, as only a great strictness about forms and ceremonies; and we think the minister who propounds on Sunday evening political discussion, and makes on the week-day political speeches, after all a good evangelical minister; and the bishop who imprisons a heretic, or schismatic, as he calls him, and probably would burn him, if he had the power, with others of the same stamp and sentiment, after all a good Protestant bishop; that the matters in dispute between Protestant and Papist are altogether of no moment; and that if a man is quite sincere, it matters little whether he be Mahometan or heathen, or Socinian or Romanist, he is equally sane; as if, for instance, a man that eats sawdust, or sand, or arsenic sincerely, is just as sure to live and be healthy, as a man that eats bread and drinks water sincerely. The sincerity makes us feel for the man,—it does not make poison become bread, or heresy become evangelical and vital truth.

The world, and politicians, and friends applaud you, as a patron of liberality; the Lord Jesus regards you as a specimen of increasing latitudinarianism; and while you think you are growing in good sense and real religion, you are only giving evidence before heaven and earth, that the last sparks of your first love are fading upon the cold altar of your soul. I do not ask you to be bigoted to a crotchet, or exclusive in your charity. God forbid! But I feel that evangelical and vital truth must not be compromised at any price, or for any purpose. Give me these great truths,—justification alone by the righteousness of Jesus, sanctification by the Spirit of Jesus alone, a rule of faith, conclusive as complete in the word of God,—and in all the rest I will be as liberal as you like; but of one jot of these central truths I can make no sacrifice. I would concede the largest pre-

judice that man can see—I will not compromise the least vital truth that God has spoken. If I compromise the truth, it is latitudinarianism—if I concede prejudice, it is liberality. May God make us liberal! may God keep us from being latitudinarian!

Another evidence of dying love is shown by our having less interest in missions than we used to have. You recollect that when you first felt the Gospel, like Melancthon, you imagined that you could go out and convert the whole world—you deemed no sacrifice for this end too great—such was your zeal, and your sympathy, and your love; when too you first found that you were a saint, you felt that the same grace which had made you a saint had necessitated your becoming a servant. It is a great fact, and we must learn not to forget it, that he who is the greatest Christian is always the greatest missionary; and I am quite satisfied, that all we have done in the missionary cause, with few exceptions, has been to give our superfluities. No man gives charity who gives a mere surplus, or some of the loose change in his pocket. It is real charity, real evangelical liberality to Christ's cause, when a Christian stints himself that he may sustain the cause of the Gospel; when he sacrifices something that he may promote the kingdom of God and of his Christ. I have got the least, generally, of sacrifice from the rich; but many a poor man in this congregation, to my certain knowledge, has made noble sacrifices; and to many a poor man, to give a pound is a greater sacrifice than for some in this congregation to give a thousand, or five thousand; and whenever we have the grace of Christ powerfully within us, and our first love in its first fervour, then we shall count it a privilege to sacrifice; and what seems sacrifice to some, will be felt by those whom grace constrains, the sweetest and most delightful pleasure.

Another evidence of departure from our first love is greater interest in party disputes, in ecclesiastical quarrels, in controversies about Church and State, and less interest in the great fact that Christ's kingdom is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. I do not blame you for having your preference—I do not blame you for leaving one communion, because you may do it conscientiously; but my conviction is complete, that the

worst ecclesiastical system upon earth, with good men to work it, must be a blessing; and the best ecclesiastical system in the universe, with bad men to work it, must only be a calamity and a curse. What is wanted is not so much new machinery, as a new spirit to rush through the old machinery. I am quite satisfied that mere outward arrangements should remain as they are; but I will not rest, and I trust, by the grace of God, (I use scriptural language, and I use it in its scriptural sense,) we shall "give the Lord no rest," until every minister of the Gospel shall be a faithful, evangelical one, and every home shall be filled by a faithful and spiritually-minded family. We must work from the centre outward to the circumference, not from the circumference inward to the centre. We must labour to make men better, and all the rest will follow. Let us feel, at all events, that whenever we begin to quarrel about Church and State, about presbytery and episcopacy, about baptism and anabaptism, we are interfering with the more important duties of ministers, and are squandering the time which we ought to occupy with more precious things. As I have told you before, I believe that all Churches, dissenting and established, are to be broken up; and if we are within twenty-four years, as can be proved, of the seventh millenary of the world,—if we are come, as the best and most pious men of the present day believe, upon the very last times, it should be our grand desire to see that we have the right love and the right life, and our loins girt; and when we have a throne in heaven and a home beyond the stars, resting on a Saviour that has bled and died for us, and looking for a Saviour that shall come and take us to himself, we can afford to look down from our serene place with very slight sympathy on the petty quarrels of petty men on petty matters.

Another evidence of leaving our first love is when we make little or no progress at all. I doubt if there be such a thing as a stationary state in human experience. I think men must advance or recede. I do not believe anything is stationary upon earth. Everything moves, everything is under an impulse; and if the impulse is not always upward, it must be downward; though he that grows downward in humility may be growing more than he that grows upward. There is the weeping willow that grows

downward, as well as the oak and the fir that shoot upward; and you must not suppose that you are ceasing to grow because you have come to discern more corruption within you — because you see more of shortcoming in all that you do — because you feel more of sin in every thought, and more of alloy in every action, and degeneracy in every motive. The very fact that you grow in the perception of your own lost state, is evidence that you are growing in fitness and capacity for that better state into which the Spirit of God shall introduce you.

Let us ask each himself, Do I love the Lord God, not only as the best Being, but as a just and a holy God? Do I love the justice that punishes sin as well as the mercy that forgives it? Do I feel it to be as precious a truth that God is holy, as that he is merciful? Do I feel that his law does not exact too much, — is not too strict, nor too narrow, nor too exclusive; on the contrary, that the law, in all its demands of infinite purity, on thought, word, and deed, is a holy, good, and righteous law? Do I desire to be emancipated from sin as my greatest calamity? Do I prefer holiness, not as the way to reward, but as the purest atmosphere that I can breathe? Do I regard sin as a bitter thing — as the essence of the curse — as the life of the worm that dies not — as the flame of the fire that is never quenched — and would I rather suffer than sin? Does Christ appear to me just the Saviour that I want? nothing less will suit me, nothing more do I require. Can I implicitly trust in him? Can I put as much faith in one promise of my Lord, written in this book, as I can in a 5*l.* Bank of England note, and believe that that promise will be as surely fulfilled in eternity, as I believe that that bank-note will be turned into gold if I go to the banker, and ask him to do so? Am I less selfish, less narrow-minded, less exclusive? more liberal, more large-hearted, more gracious, more sympathising, more loving, more pitiful, more courteous? Are these things in me and abounding? then I have evidence within me that my love is not extinguished, that its fire burneth as fire that has had its flame kindled from the Sun of Righteousness, and has the oil, or the unction of the Holy Spirit to sustain it, and keep it alive. If the Holy Spirit leave the heart, then it becomes cold — if the Holy Spirit dwell in the heart, then there is a flame

in it that never can die—a light that never shall be extinguished—a glory that shall never become dim. Have you ever prayed this prayer, not the least precious that man can offer, “O Lord, give me thy Holy Spirit!” I cannot be satisfied with asking for faith, grace, or repentance; I must have the Author of them all. It would be blasphemy, were it not truth, when I say that the believer’s heart is the fane—the very temple, the chosen dwelling-place, the royal palace of the Holy Spirit of truth. Seek that Holy Spirit—look not to your baptism, nor to your Church, nor to any ceremony; look above them all, and beyond them all, and say, “O God, give me thy Holy Spirit, and give it me for Christ’s sake.” Can he refuse? He cannot. “If ye, fathers, being evil,” with all your imperfections, “know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit unto them that ask him?” In order to raise your love to its greatest height, study God’s love in Christ. Think of God as a giver, not as a judge—as giving, never as demanding; always think of him as loving, never as condemning; hear perpetually ringing, like a sweet sound, in the very depths of your soul, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Think of that blessed Saviour who crossed a chasm that no angel’s wing can fly over, and waded through a sea of sorrow that no human plumb-line can fathom, and descended to an ignominy and shame that even our imagination cannot realise, for no object and for no end but that man, with the weapons of rebellion in his hand, and the feelings of hatred in his heart, might be pardoned—reclaimed—regenerated—accepted—saved.

To obtain this love, do not think so much of the love that you feel within to Christ, but rather of the love that Christ feels to you. The way for you to increase your love to Christ, is to think very little about what you have attained, but very much of the love wherewith Christ has loved you. Did I wish, for instance, to kindle in my heart revenge, and hatred, and ill-will against some particular person, I would not go into my study and say, “Now I am determined to be revenged on that person, and I will therefore try by every means to blow up the coal of revenge

within me ;” for I never should succeed by any such inner introspection of my heart, in raising within it a feeling of revenge. What should I do then ? I would think of the wrong that person had done me,—of the crime he had perpetrated,—of the evil he had inflicted on me,—of the ill words he had spoken about me,—and, without thinking of anything within me, but only of the outward evil that he had done to me, I should quickly feel, if capable of such passions, revenge burning within my heart, till it blazed into a flame. And so if there were any person I wished to love me, and I were to say to that person, “You shall love me,” he would not do it; if I should say, “I will give you 10,000*l.* to-morrow, if you will love me,” he would tell me, “Love is not a marketable article ;” or if I were to say to him, “I will inflict upon you imprisonment, torture, and death, if you do not love me,” that person would say, “I may be silent about you, but no torture that you can apply can make love grow in my heart, and no reward that you can offer can create affection.” What then must I do ? I would go and make some great sacrifice for that person. Were it a mother, and were her child to fall into the roaring cataract, and the shrieks of her agonized affection to call me to the place, I would, at the risk of my life, plunge into the stream, and seize the perishing babe, and bring it safe to shore, and place it in its mother’s bosom, and then I would say, “I have commanded you to love me, and you would not ; I have threatened, and you would not ; I have promised, and you would not ; do you love me now ?” her answer would be, “I cannot but love one who has showed such love and devotedness to me.” And so we love Christ ; not because he commands us, not because he threatens us, and not because he promises, but “we love him because he first loved us.” Thus, then, think more of Christ’s love to you, and less of your love to him ; and if your first love has lost its fervour, it will be restored — if it has lost its vigour, it will be strengthened, and if it have not all the passion that it had, it will have the fixed and riveted principle prepared for all sacrifices that may occur in the providence of God.

LECTURE VII

THE DIVINE PRESCRIPTION.

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.”—REV. ii. 5, 6.

IN my first discourse I directed your attention to the eulogium pronounced upon the Church of Ephesus, as it is related in the second verse of this chapter. I showed you, first, Christ singling out the excellencies of a Church before he states and condemns her sins, in order that the eulogium pronounced upon what is good may thus be made the vehicle by which he will convey, not less pointedly, but with less obstruction, the verdict of condemnation upon the evil. Man’s plan is to pounce upon the evil, as wasps pounce upon over-ripe fruit, and then barely to admit the good. God’s plan is to pronounce upon the good, and give all the credit that can be given to it; but in faithful words, and yet with an affectionate spirit, to reprove and denounce the evil. So our Lord tells this Church, “I know thy works;” my omniscient eye has seen them all. How delightful is this thought, that the cup of cold water given by the trembling hand of a believer, and the rich dowry that is cast into the Christian treasury by a king, are equally seen and accurately appreciated by Him who searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men. And “I know thy labour and thy patience,” and thy faithfulness, “how thou canst not bear them which are evil,” and also thy protestantism, “how thou hast tried them,” by the law and by the testimony, “which say they are apostles,” assume to be apostles, “and are not, and hast found them liars.” “I have known,” he says, “thou hast borne much reproach”—so must Christians

still, in proportion to their faithfulness and protestantism—"and hast had patience." "Let patience have her perfect work;" and "thy labour," he says, has been single-eyed, disinterested beautiful, holy; for thou hast laboured not for thine own *éclat*, aggrandizement, or renown, but "for my name's sake;" and your labour, too, has been seconded, for thou hast not only laboured, and laboured for my name's sake, but thou hast not fainted. So beautiful and glowing is the commendation pronounced upon the Church at Ephesus! And then with what exquisite delicacy—with what Christian courtesy, if you will allow the expression, is the condemnation introduced! Never is rebuke so poignant as when it is pronounced by the lips of love; never does a true Christian feel his sin to be so sinful, as when it is pointed out by him who has washed him in his own blood, and made him a priest and a king unto his God. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee;" and what is that somewhat? "Because thou hast left thy first love."

This was my subject last Lord's-day evening. I showed you what was the evidence of a Christian departing from his first love;—less delight in the Bible, less delight in prayer, less care about truth; the idea that he that persecutes it may be a good Protestant, and he that denies it a good evangelical minister; and that every man will be saved, believe what he likes, provided he is sincere. Whenever a Christian is on the inclined plane, and beginning to go downwards from the warm sun of true love, you will see that one of his first steps is indifference to the essential and vital importance of evangelical and scriptural truth. I then said, that the next evidence of this declining love was, what is just the besetting sin of all you who are not decided in this congregation, trying to balance Christianity and the world; having a seat in the church and a box in the playhouse—a favourite actor in the one, and a delightful preacher in the other—determined that each shall do his best in his place, but that neither shall dare uncharitably to interfere with the other; endeavouring most carefully so to balance your conformity to the world with the peace of your conscience, that you shall keep the one shielded from compunction, and yet cherish, love, and delight in the other. Be on your guard. I believe in the perseverance of saints, but

that does not prevent me from stating broadly and distinctly, that when these symptoms begin to develop themselves, they are the signs of a fading, a departing gospel, a dying soul.

Let me now turn your attention to the prescription. We have seen, first, the health in the shape of commendation; we have seen, next, the disease and its symptoms. Let us now regard the prescription for its cure; and this prescription, let me say, is addressed, not to the Church at Ephesus only, but to you. Truth, my dear friends, is not a thing of one century that becomes a lie in the next; nor is truth something of latitude and longitude, that may be true in Rome, false in Paris, and neither the one nor the other in London. Truth is like its God—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. What was true when addressed to the Church at Ephesus, either as descriptive of its excellencies, its disease, or its cure, is just as true and as applicable in the day in which we live, and in the place in which we now sit. Do not suppose that this is a prescription for the Church at Ephesus, but not for the congregation in Crown Court. It is not so; it is God's prescription for human-kind—it is a leaf from the tree of life, to be laid upon the agonized and bleeding heart of humanity—it is God's cure for man's sin, as precious to you as ever it was to the Angel at Ephesus, or the meanest worshipper in his congregation.

This prescription is contained in these words:—"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and take away thy candlestick out of his place." Let me now very plainly lay this before you. First, there is retrospect, "remember from whence thou art fallen;" secondly, there is repentance, "repent;" thirdly, there is reformation, "do the first works;" and lastly, there is a menace, a threat, that if she did not do so, her candlestick, *i. e.* her visible privileges, should be removed from its place.

First of all, there is a retrospect; that retrospect is the exercise of memory. We are thus taught that God means every power to be wielded in his service. I do not believe that there is a single faculty in the human bosom to which Satan has any right, or which the world can command as its own monopoly. I believe that all the powers of man are meant to serve God—all

the affections of man to twine and cluster around the throne of God—and all the influence of man to be baptized from on high, and dedicated to the glory of him who has redeemed us by his blood, and made us kings and priests unto our God. Man is to be the priest of the world, reflecting all the goodness that has passed before him—his imagination lifting up that goodness in the most beautiful expressions, and his voice setting forth the excellencies of him who has called him out of darkness into his marvellous light. Take a retrospect of the past—you who are conscious of dying love; ask yourselves what once you were, and what you find yourselves to be now. Remember the first responsive emotion of love that you felt to him who snatched you like a brand from the burning. Remember the enthusiastic devotion to his cause, that distinguished you by day and was like a sunlight around you by night. “Call to remembrance,” in the language of Scripture, “the former days;” compare what you feel that you are, with what you know that you were; compare the paradise to which grace raised you; with the cold and miserable state into which your own estrangement has plunged you—the sunlit crag to which the goodness of God had lifted you, with the cold and dark valley in which your fading first love has now left you. Are you not conscious of a mighty change? Do you feel that the transition I have described is not a sketch of the fancy, but a delineation of what you yourselves are conscious of responding to? What is this retrospect for? It is in order that by the exercise of it we may retrace, by God’s grace, our steps. I do not mean to say that a Christian will always have the warm and enthusiastic feeling that he had “when first,” to use the language of the hymn, “he saw the Lord.” This, I believe, will sober down and partake more of the strength of a principle, and less of the glow and warmth of a passion. But yet there will be a mingling of the warmth of the one with the steadiness and firmness of the other. I do not say that it is evidence of departing love that the first glow of your early feeling has sobered down, for what you have lost in fervour you may have gained in fixity and strength; and when sacrifices are required, you are no less prepared joyfully and readily to make them. To illustrate what I mean, suppose a son has an ardent attachment to his parents,

that attachment does not show itself by an excited and enthusiastic feeling that plays like lightning amid his heartstrings without shade or suspension ; but let his parents be in jeopardy, then that son will show how he loves them, by rushing to rescue them from their danger. I alluded this morning to the touching conduct related of Ensign Pennicuik in the recent action in India, who, on seeing his father fall, lest even the dead body of his parent should be dishonoured by the foe, rushed to the spot, and perished in defending his remains.

There may thus be deep and ardent affection not felt at every moment, indeed, but ready to pour forth its strong and powerful expression when the crisis comes which demands its exercise and efflux. If you, then, have departed really and indeed from your first love, are you the happier for it? has your departure from God added to your peace? has not a cold shadow crept over your hearts, dense in the ratio of your distance from God? Has your weakened desire to know his blessed word made you, on the whole, more merry? You know it has not; you know there are thoughts within, you can neither crush nor endure, — compunctions and undefined fears which all the opiates in the world cannot deaden. You learn by contrast that the highest Christianity is the highest happiness, and that the greatest distance from God is the nearest to hell. What is heaven? Nearness to God — union and communion with him. What is hell? Distance from God. And just in proportion as one's first love fades, in the same proportion one ceases to be happy.

Never can man know or taste the highest possible happiness, till he knows and feels the certainty of salvation. It is God's great law that it shall be so. Holiness and happiness are inseparable. The whole Gospel is just a command to be happy, an entreaty to be happy; and the man that knows and loves his Saviour feels free of the universe, because he has the blessed enfranchisement of the New Jerusalem. That man walks the world with an elastic footstep, who looks down with unconcern upon the field of battle, and the field of death, if needs be, looking for a more certain and a blessed and glorious resurrection.

Thus, then, is memory brought to play its part in restoring us to our first love. No one can have studied the Scripture without

noticing how often memory is thus used. We find a beautiful instance in the book of Deuteronomy, where Moses says, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord chasteneth thee." Memory was thus called into action in the bosom of an Israelite, that by comparing the goodness he had tasted in the past, he might feel more the responsibilities that devolved upon him in the present. So we read again: "Remember thy Creator," "Remember the Sabbath day;" and in that striking instance of the conversion of Peter, in the Gospel of Mark, we read, that when Peter began to curse and to swear, and immediately the cock crew; "then Peter called to mind the words which Jesus had said to him;" *i. e.*, Peter called up and collected together in his memory what Jesus had said unto him — all the love he had tasted, all the benefits he had reaped, all the miracles he had seen, all the sympathy that Jesus had expressed; and then when memory made to rush into his soul the recollections of a thousand blessings, his heart smote him with the conviction of his aggravated sins: thus the exercise of memory added to the compunctions of conscience, and made Peter go out and weep bitterly. So much, then, for the first part of my subject, the retrospect.

The second prescription is repentance. "Remember from whence thou hast fallen, and repent." What is repentance? Ask the Church of Rome, and she will tell you it is wearing a haircloth girdle, going on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or marching in a wild crusade, or repeating a thousand paternosters with the lips, without one "our Father" in the heart. In a word, she will point to her translation of the Bible where she has rendered it, not "repentance," but "penance." Penance is a very easy

thing; repentance needs for its creation Omnipotent love. I venture to assert that I could get many a man to march a thousand miles with pebbles in his shoes, rather than to repent and renounce one darling lust, one cherished sin. The priest can command penance, the living God alone can create repentance. The Church of Rome, wherever the word "repentance" is found in our version, renders it "do penance," except in one passage, where it is said that Christ "is exalted to *give* repentance;" there she has deviated from her usual course; she dared not translate it "penance;" in this instance she has therefore rendered it, just as we do, "repentance." But why? Because, as long as she renders the word "do penance," man, the poor victim of her wiles, does it because it is prescribed; but if the Church of Rome were to render it, Christ is "exalted to *give* penance," the victim would say, "If I can get penance from Christ, why should I perform it?" It would be like a ray of the Gospel—a gleam of grace; it might lead him from the thralldom of error into the glorious liberty of the Gospel of Jesus. What is repentance, then? It is not a transitory outburst, but an abiding feeling; it is not exclusively tears, but tears and smiles combined, like a rainbow, round the human heart—dew-drops and sunbeams woven together. It is not a feeling, as I have said, of first love, so much as a great principle within us. Repentance is not the momentary outburst of to-day, followed by the coldness of to-morrow; it is that genuine sorrow for sin which has something of the fervour of a passion, but more of the fixity and permanence of a holy principle.

Such is repentance. I may state it more particularly to be sorrow for sin itself, and not simply for its consequences. Any one repents when he feels the consequences of his misconduct; but a believer grieves and is sorry, not because of the consequences only, but mainly because of the sin which he has committed. Pharaoh would cry, "Take away the frogs," when they came upon him as the punishment of his sin; but David only could pray, "Take away my sins." Judas repented when he saw the consequence of his treachery; Peter repented when he saw his sin. The one felt the effects to be intolerable, the other felt the sin to be grievous in the sight of God. Such is one great

mark of genuine repentance—it is sorrow for sin as sin, and not merely for its consequences.

Another feature of genuine repentance is sorrow on account of secret sins. One of the best and most decisive tests of a Christian's regeneration is when he can mourn when no eye can see him but God's, and no ear can hear him but God's, and pray for the forgiveness of sins which nobody in the world ever suspected, but which lodge or nestle in the inmost recesses of his heart—when in one's own closet, or in the exchange, or behind the counter, or in the counting-house, or wherever the providence of God has placed you, you can grieve when that grief can find no expression without, and mourn over a sense of sin when that mourning has neither tears to display it, nor language to express it. Such sorrow for such sins is one of the strongest evidences that there is a new heart, and a repentance not to be repented of.

Do not look upon what I have described as something relating to a third party. It relates to you, and therefore I ask you, have you ever thus sorrowed? have you ever grieved over the recollection of a sin which the nearest and dearest friend you have never knew, nor saw, nor suspected? Such sorrow for such sin is evidence that you feel that sin to be bitter, because you feel it to be committed against a good and gracious Father. And, blessed be God, such a feeling is the clear precursor of a voice that rings from the skies, and finds its multiplied echoes of joy in each believing heart: "My son, my daughter, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

In the next place, such genuine and true repentance is ever associated with the abjuration and abandonment of sin. Some persons have the idea that if you are sorry for sin to-day and plunge into it again to-morrow, you have only to be sorry for it again, and take another plunge into it the next day. That is not repentance. No man is heartily sorry that he has done anything who does not hate that thing; and no man really repents of a crime who does not heartily abjure that crime. Pharaoh repented of his sins, and returned to them again; Saul acknowledged his persecution of David, and yet he persisted in it; but the patriarch Job said, "I have done iniquity, I will do so no more." There was in the two first a repentance to be repented of; you have in

the last a repentance which leads to life eternal. I may here notice a mistake into which ministers sometimes fall, when they represent repentance as something altogether different in kind from anything of which fallen man has experience or consciousness in his natural state, or that we have nothing parallel to it, or at all resembling it, in our actual experience. This is a great mistake, and has often misled people. If, for instance, you have offended some kind friend — if you are conscious that you have grieved and wounded one who has showered upon you a thousand benefits, and you see the sin and the ingratitude which you have committed in its true light, you are grieved and wounded to the heart that you have done it. Here you have the shadow upon earth of that repentance which is recognised in heaven. You have only to withdraw the human friend, with all his imperfections, and to substitute for him your Father who is in heaven, and to recollect that against him you have committed deeper offences, and have shown toward him a yet intenser and more aggravated ingratitude; and feeling and reflecting upon these things, it is neither enthusiasm nor folly, nor is it unnatural, that you should mourn and be in bitterness, as one that weeps and is in bitterness for the loss of his first-born. The world will condemn you, if you do not repent of ingratitude shown to a friend on earth. Strange it is that the world's philosophers will denounce you when you speak of a broken heart and a contrite spirit for your sins, and sorrow for your transgressions, as only a sort of evangelical fanaticism or methodistic enthusiasm. The world can admit only what it can comprehend—it will not admit what it knoweth not; for the world knows neither a Christian nor a Christian's experience.

Let me notice that there is another shadow upon earth of that repentance which is recognised in heaven. Suppose that some person has done you a grievous wickedness, do you not require that he should own his fault before you can cordially receive him into friendship and fellowship with you? What is this but a testimony in the experience of humanity of the necessity of your repentance being shown by confession before him against whom we have sinned? I do not say (God forbid!) that this repentance is forgiveness of our sins; but such genuine repentance is ever

associated with the forgiveness of sins on God's part, and the enjoyment of peace and fellowship with God on our part.

But why, it may be asked, is repentance so necessary? I answer, repentance is so necessary because it is the evidence, wherever it is felt, of the prior existence of grace in the heart; wherever there is expressed genuine repentance, there there is the evidence of the existence of genuine love. One of God's great designs in giving a Saviour is to create in the bosom of sinners responsive and returning love. Heaven is the air and the home of love. Love is to be the governing element of the universe; and where there is love in a family, in a congregation, in a parish, in a country, there law, and prison, and penalty will be supererogatory and unknown. Now, no sinner can come to love God without bitterly regretting that he has ever ceased to love him, or truly repent that he has offended God, unless that there has been implanted in his heart the love of God. Repentance is just love weeping. Repentance is the result and feeling of love looking to him against whom it has sinned. Repentance is the tear that starts into the eye of love; it is the feeling evolved in our transition from a state of hatred to a state of love and acceptance before God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is thus, then, that wherever there is expressed genuine repentance for sin, there must be, prior to that expression, genuine love to God; and where there is no love to be found to give weight to its tears and eloquence to its expression, it would not be the repentance which is grief that we have offended our greatest benefactor, and which is not on earth or hereafter to be repented of.

The true way to experience this repentance, or, what is equivalent to it, this love, is to study the humiliation and suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ. Looking to the Lord Jesus Christ is the way to feel what repentance is, and to know what responsive love is; not looking to him merely as a sufferer in order to sympathise with his wrongs, as the mere sentimentalist of the world might do; but looking to the Lord Jesus Christ as the expression of God's love, suffering, dying, atoning, satisfying for us. It is God in Christ making atonement for our sins that is the key which unlocks the recesses of the soul, bows the way-

ward affections, creates responsive love ; for “ we love him because he first loved us.” No contemplation of sin in its hatefulness can make us love God. All the interdicts that were ever pronounced on Sinai—all the curses that were ever fulminated from Mount Ebal, may create the dread of sin or the horror of God, but never can create repentance for sin or love to God. But when we see that love against which we have sinned, which we have wounded by our ingratitude—which we have forgotten and forsaken and renounced a thousand times—against which almost every thought has been rebellion, and from which every affection has been apostasy—when we behold that love submitting to be wounded for our transgressions, bleeding for us, enduring the intensest agony for us, and for us while we were yet sinners—the heart that is hardened against the thunders of Sinai is melted and subdued by the mercies of Calvary, and we love him who first loved us. When we come to love him, how does that love grieve that it ever ceased to love him ! How does that love grieve that it ever suspected his mercy ! How does that love confess among its most grievous sins that it has never loved God as it ought to have loved him ! I believe that this sin we often commit, and not the least aggravated of all. How seldom do we confess that we have had hard thoughts of God, or feel it to be our sin that we have doubted his mercy, suspected his love, and pronounced his dispensations penal when they were only paternal ! How seldom do we confess as our sin that we have not been happy when the whole Gospel was written to make us so !—that want of joy is a sin just as much as want of holiness ! The kingdom of God is composed of three elements ; two-thirds are privilege, one-third is character. “ The kingdom of God is righteousness”—there is character ; “ and peace”—there is privilege ; “ and joy in the Holy Ghost”—privilege again. We often confess that we have not the first, righteousness ; how seldom do we own it as our sin before God that we have not felt the peace that we ought to have felt, or experienced the joy which he intended us to feel !

Repentance, then, I have said, is produced by looking to the Saviour ; and in the next place, let me say, that this looking to the Saviour always leads us to come to him. “ I will arise,” said the prodigal son “ and go”—where ?—“ to my Father.” That

single expression, "my Father," was the secret of that prodigal's genuine repentance. "To the Lord *our* God," says the prophet, "belong mercies and forgiveness." The stream that comes from the throne of God rises to the level from which it came. God plants repentance in the heart, and that repentance rises to him again, and brings us nearer to him against whom we have sinned. Wherever, I may say, there is genuine repentance, there is also genuine confession of sin; but as that is but the outward expression of the inward feeling, I shall not dwell longer upon it, but proceed at once to the third part of my subject, on which I shall very briefly dwell—"Do the first works."

I have considered, first, the retrospect; secondly, the repentance; and there remains to be considered, thirdly, the reformation. "Do the first works." The first leads to the second, the second leads to the third; and there are innumerable points of Scripture which show that wherever there is such a retrospect, and such repentance, there there is such a reformation of character and conduct. We have a very striking instance of this recorded by the Apostle Paul when he speaks of his own conversion, and of the course of crime and iniquity which he had pursued previous to it. He says, "I verily thought that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth;" and then he recapitulates what he did in Acts xxvi. 9—11. The retrospect of his sins leads him to repent of them; and that repentance leads him to a devotedness and consistency, an enthusiasm and self-sacrifice which made him, if once the least of all saints, the greatest of all the Apostles. This reformation then is, to do the first works. Our end is, to do the first works; our purpose, "I will take heed to my ways;" our precaution, "thy word have I hid in my heart that I offend not thee."

Repentance is to bewail the sins that you have committed, and not to commit the sins that you have bewailed. And the way to do the first works is to return to the first love. Wherever there is the first love, there there will be the first works. The most splendid sacrifices made without love are vain; the most magnificent bequests made to a Church or to humanity, without love, are vain. It is possible to give your body to be burned and consumed by the flame, and yet to be without love; it is possible to give all

your goods to feed the poor, and yet to be without love. But if you have this affection first, then these first works will follow and burst into bloom, like the buds around you at the approach of spring, as soon as they feel the touch of the warmth of the approaching summer. A Church without love is a dead Church, and a Church without works is a Church that fails in one of the grand functions of its mission, to be a witness to the world of what Christianity can do.

A Christian Church ought to be an exhibition of heaven upon earth,—a manifestation of Christ below,—a witness for God in the midst of the world,—so that the world looking at that Church may be able to say, “This is a specimen of what that which is called the Gospel can do; this is a model of what Christianity can achieve.” And so, strangers on the stones of the exchange, the sailor on the deck, the soldier on the battle-field; all, in short, with whom you come into contact in all your intercourse in life, will say, “That man does not say much about his Christianity when transacting his business, but there prevails in all he is and does an integrity, a singleness of eye, a simplicity of purpose, a faithfulness to his engagements, a superiority to trial, that prove he must have some fountain of peace, and comfort, and joy that we have not; we will go and hear what he hears, learn the lessons that he has learned, and taste, if it be possible, the happiness which we see in his character.” And thus such a one becomes to mankind either the salt that silently keeps society from corruption, or the light shining on the hill-top, that illuminates the earth with a ray of the glory of heaven.

Such is the Divine prescription; first, the retrospect, or review, which I pray you to take, and judge what you are by the recollection of what you were. Secondly, if you find that you have fallen from your first and holiest impressions—if you discover that your heart has become more cold, your affections more worldly, your love less ardent—repent. Grieve that you have thus walked unworthy of so good and so gracious a God; seek forgiveness through the blood of sprinkling. He waits, he rejoices, he is glorified to bestow it; and, having obtained it, go forth to the world resolved on sacrifice, on suffering, on death, if needs be, but that you will let your light so shine before men

that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven.

And as members of a Church, as a congregation collected together, you will testify your love by your liberality to the claims of Christ, and by your liberal response to every appeal in the missionary cause. You will make this to be clearly understood, that your Christianity is not a Sunday coat, to be put off when Monday comes; that it is not a shibboleth, a holiday attire; but that it is a silent, it may be, but a plastic, transforming, sanctifying principle, implanted by the Spirit of God, and which the world can neither crush nor conceal.

LECTURE VIII.

THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”—REV. II. 7.

I HAVE explained, first, the commendation of the Church at Ephesus as it is expressed in the second and third verses; next, the censure pronounced upon it,—so gently and courteously pronounced,—“I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love;” next, the prescription, “Remember from whence thou art fallen, repent, and do the first works ”

I ought to have added in my last discourse some remarks on the sixth verse: “This thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes.” These were a sect who held wrong principles, and indulged in still worse practices. We have here an important distinction. Our Lord thus addresses the Church of Ephesus; “Thou hatest,” not the Nicolaitanes themselves, but “the deeds” by which they were degraded. The distinction in a Christian’s mind should ever be, “love to the sinner, the most ardent he can feel; hatred to his sins, the most unmitigated he can conceive.” Our Lord so loved the sinner that he died to redeem him; he so detested the sin that he shed his blood to expiate and cancel it. We must love the Nicolaitanes, and pray for them, and try to convince and to convert them, but all the while our familiarity with their persons must produce no sympathy with their sins; and these we must hate not merely because they are inexpedient,—not merely because they are unpopular,—not merely because they will do damage to us in the world,—but on this high and holy ground, that Christ hates them. Sympathy with

Christ's mind is the glory of the Christian, and in proportion as we grow in grace, in the same proportion do we love what he loves and hate what he hates.

We then come to the promise: "Let him that hath an ear hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." It is not a promise to the Ephesian Church only; "let him that hath an ear,"—Ephesian, Roman, Greek, Englishman, Scotchman, Irishman—"let *him that hath an ear*"—let all humanity—"hear what the Spirit saith," not to one Church, but "to the Churches" of every age, country, form, denomination, and circumstance; "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Let me speak now, not of the victory, but of the conflict; not of the laurels, but of the garments rolled in blood. The expression victory sounds musical in a nation's ears; but often it rings with terrible knell in many a widow's and an orphan's heart. Victory is sung in poet's song, lauded in the senate, shouted by the nation, as if it were an accent of jubilee; but all the while that a nation's heart is bounding, many a widow's and orphan's heart is breaking. "To him that overcometh,"—the word victory implies previous conflict; such conflict as is the invariable mark of our present state. If we are the people of God, Christianity declares that it is so. Whether we like it or not, we are made soldiers the moment that we become Christians. The whole earth becomes a battle-field the moment that the whole heart becomes the seat of the grace and spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who, it may be asked, are the forces who are engaged in this field? On the one side, Satan, and the beast, and the false prophet, and all that are assimilated to their character or infected by their principles. On the other side, the Lord Jesus Christ, and they that bear his name—that glory in his cross—who are baptized with his baptism and regenerated by his Spirit. These are the two hosts; they are correlatives; one or other must be supreme; there can be no peace or compromise between them; and as long as the world has Satan in the midst of it—its usurper, and as long as the Church of Christ has the Lord of Glory in the midst of it—its Captain, so long there will be conflict. The wisdom that is from above is *first pure, then peaceable*; and until the whole earth is filled with

the purity of truth, it will not repose in the quiet, and be covered with the prevalence of Christian peace. And remember—as long as this dispensation remains—conflict, battle, struggle is its characteristic; and if there be any man in this assembly who does not know what it is to battle with iniquity without—who does not know what it is to struggle with temptation, and evil, and wickedness within—that gives too unequivocal proof that he is not the soldier of Christ, he is on Satan's side, and Satan will leave him unmolested as long as he makes no effort to cease to be his victim. Only when he begins to enlist himself beneath the banner of his Lord will Satan make the attack upon him.

In the next place, the theatre of this conflict is the world in which we live. There is no conflict in heaven, because storms and discord and evil passions cannot enter there. There is no conflict in hell, for all there is defeat—desperation—despair. But earth, which lies between the two, not yet covered with the sunshine of the one, nor, blessed be God, yet consigned to the gloom and bitterness of the other, is the great battle-field on which Satan wars with Christ, and the hosts of heaven are arrayed against the hosts of hell. The prize is your soul—my soul.

“What is the thing of greatest price,
The whole creation round?
That which was lost in paradise—
That which in Christ is found.

“The soul of man—Jehovah's breath—
It keeps two worlds in strife;
Hell works beneath its work of death,
Heaven stoops to give it life.

“And is this treasure borne below
In earthly vessels frail?
Can none its utmost value know
Till flesh and spirit fail?

“Then let us gather round the Cross,
That knowledge to obtain;
Not by the soul's eternal loss,
But everlasting gain.”

This is the prize; this the subject of the conflict.

Having seen the two parties, let us next examine the weapons

wielded on the one side by Satan and by them that are his; and next, the weapons wielded on the other side, that is, by Christ and them that are his.

First, let me look at the weapons wielded by Satan and his forces.

The first weapon that Satan wields is *deception*. "He is a liar," says the Apostle, "and the father of it." He seduced Eve from her loyalty, Adam from his allegiance, humanity from its God, by the skilful use of a lie: "Hath God said that ye shall surely die?" And so he uses this weapon still. He teaches one there is no God—that a God is the dream of bigots, the bugbear of enthusiasts. He teaches another that the Bible is a book of exquisite poetry, beautiful history, and excellent morality; useful to keep the vulgar in awe, but not fit for superior minds or noble understandings; and as for Satan, (for Satan will suffer this,) he is a figure of speech, a pretence, a myth; and a new heart is the dream of an enthusiast, and the requirement of fanatical methodism. He will teach others that the world is a glorious place, money the greatest good, and to get rich in the shortest time and by any means, if the means are only mighty and rapid, is the way to enjoy the greatest happiness; that a man has reached the culminating point of the happiness of which he is capable, when he can sit down, amid all the profits he has reaped, in his country-seat and amid his fertile fields, and say, "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry, for thou hast much goods laid up for many years;" not knowing that a voice may be on its journey from the throne, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." Others, again, whose hearts are touched, whose consciences are stirred, and who begin to think that it will not do to live in sin, and yet that they must not commit themselves to Christianity—those men who are afraid of their infidelity lest it should fail them, and who are frightened at Christianity lest it should annoy them—who dare not embrace the Gospel lest they should lose the sweets of sin, and dare not continue in sin lest they should lose the quiet of their consciences—those men who are struggling between antagonistic principles, and powers, and prospects—Satan meets and wields the weapon that succeeded so splendidly in the case of Felix, and

succeeds so well still — “Put it off to a convenient season; and when you have got rid of this trouble, and got over that difficulty, or earned this little money, and met that little liability, then you will turn to Christianity and cordially embrace it.” This is one of Satan’s most popular specifics; but, like all quack medicines, it promises health, it acts as poison. Another lie that Satan uses, when the conscience wakes at last to a sense of its misery—when it is stirred to its depths by the fears of hell, the declarations of Scripture, the appeals of the preacher, and life is closing and death approaching—“You have heretofore put off and off, saying there is time enough; now, I tell you, it is too late. The blood of the Lamb has lost its efficacy; the mercy of God is exhausted, and there is none for you;” and he endeavours to plunge into despair the dying man whom, when a living and a healthy man, he kept upon the giddy heights and pinnacles of presumption. Thus he tempts to presume at one time, and to despair at another. All these are lies. There is no convenient season but the present; there is no presumption that is not peril and crime; and there can be no room for despair while life lasts. If the present should be the eleventh hour—if the last sound of the twelfth were ringing in your hearing—the exhibition of Christ, and him crucified, accepted in the cordiality of your hearts, is instant pardon and eternal peace.

Another weapon by which Satan strives to conquer in this conflict is temptation. Satan goes about, says the Apostle, “seeking whom he may devour.” He is called elsewhere “the prince of this world.” Satan, you may depend upon it, knows a vast deal more about you and me than either of us is disposed to admit. He knows every man’s weak point—the very spot from which he can assail him with the most certain and speedy success. He has all the archangel’s wisdom, all the cunning of the fiend, and in addition, he has the tact and the experience of six thousand years. The wonder is not that so many fall before his power, but that any, except by the grace of God, are able to resist him. Some ill-informed persons he seduces as the tempter to reject Christianity, teaching them that it is the mark of a noble and a free mind to despise the Gospel, and of a superstitious mind to accept it. Others again he so fascinates with the splendour, the

pomp, and the vanities of the world, that these supersede and render altogether unimportant in their estimate the things of God, of the soul, and of eternity. Others again he draws into amusements which are perfectly innocent in their place, but in which he involves them so deeply, that the amusement, innocent in itself, becomes, from its absorbing nature, alike sinful and fatal. We ought never to forget that it is not so much by things which are positively sinful that men perish, as by the excessive love of that which is positively lawful. It was the marrying of a wife in one place, the purchase of oxen in another, the buying of a field in a third—things all lawful in themselves—that induced the men in the parable to reject the invitation to the marriage-supper.

So Satan succeeds, by leading Christian men, and Christian ministers, to be so charmed and delighted with things in their own place perfectly lawful, that these monopolize and exhaust all their attention and sympathies, and the weighty things of eternity are superseded. Thus, with one man literature assumes the claims of religion, science takes the place of the Bible with a second, teetotalism usurps the place of Christianity with a third, hydropathy becomes the business of a life, instead of the cure of a disease in a fourth; and men talk incessantly about these things as if they were the main things; and, judging from the conversation of some, we should suppose there was no such thing as a Bible, a Gospel, or Saviour in the world.

In the Ephesian Church his method of attack was not declared hostility to the Gospel, or the suggestion of what was positively evil, but by insinuating to that Church, Your love is far too fervent, it is too high, it is beyond the boiling-point; let it cool down a little; take my standard, which is reasonable; God's is too high; take things in moderation; your works are too many, you will ruin your health; you are over-religious, just come down a little; be moderate, take it easily and coolly, and do not indulge in that excessive zeal which the world justly calls fanaticism. And as for your being enjoined to repent, God knows no repentance is necessary; you have very little to repent of; and as for doing the first works, the last are better than the first. And then you have one excellency, you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes; and very often men's hatred of something that somebody else

does is made to cover the sin that is so dear to and so much cherished by themselves.

Another weapon that Satan uses in this conflict is human instrumentality. These instruments are some of them professedly his, and others of them unconsciously his. He gets a footing even in the pulpit of the sanctuary itself, and corrupts the minister; so that if he does not preach what is actually wrong, he leads him to leave out what is unpopular, unfashionable, or unpalatable. He gains a footing likewise in the school, in the academy, in the university, where, if he does not teach what is morally wrong, he exhausts secular learning of that which is its only corrective, the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus. He works the press, the most powerful weapon he can wield; he deals out gilded aphorisms to catch the vulgar, and popular plausibilities that form the staple of the cheap newspapers; and on the Sunday he despatches with incessant energy and zeal the most corrupting and pestilential lessons over the length and breadth of the land. He thus works the press for his own purposes. What are Proudhon, and Barbès, and Blanqui, but his priests? What are Socialist halls but his meeting-houses? What are the profane publications that pollute the land but the public efforts of Satan, expressly to destroy souls? It is thus that Satan works by human instrumentality.

In the fourth place, Satan corrupts and perverts what is good, and thus acts against the Gospel. In this conflict, namely, in the corruption and perversion of that which is good, Satan is most powerful. For instance, the Church of the Jews was founded amid miracles, taught by prophets, patronised by God; that Church Satan turned into an apostasy; it crucified the Lord of glory, and tried to extinguish that truth it was raised to maintain. So the Christian Church had no sooner started in the world, glorious with Apostolic light, spreading on the right hand and on the left, than Satan sowed the seeds of heresy, till the prediction that an Apostle gave to the Thessalonians came to be practically developed at Rome; and the cartoon sketched so graphically in the Epistle to the Thessalonians came to be filled up with that overshadowing despotism, which murdered the saints, enslaved the world, and domineered over the kings of the whole earth;

which elevated a woman to the place of Christ—exalted the works of the creature till they became a mighty mountain, and made the merits of Jesus dwindle down into a perpetually diminishing perspective. I may add, too, that Satan not only *has corrupted* the Christian Church, but that he *is corrupting* at the present moment various sections of the Protestant Church. Need I refer to the deadly superstition that is at this moment eating like a canker-worm not a few members of the Church of this land? Need I refer to the Oxford Tracts issued by those who have been their most bold and able advocates? Satan no sooner beheld the dawning glories of Protestant Christianity, and felt the tide of battle rolling irresistibly against him, than he spiked the guns of those on the Lord's side in one direction, and turned them round in another direction, and levelled them against the very citadel they were intended to defend!

There is another weapon that Satan uses, and has long used with great success—persecution. Pagan persecution was the earliest instance of the use of that weapon, when man murdered man, in order to mend his conscience or to save his soul. The next use of this weapon was papal persecution, when the priest, under the pretence of defending the Gospel of Jesus, burned his fellow because he differed from him, till the flames of persecution rose from the Valleys of Piedmont, and amid the recesses of the Cottian Alps, and from Smithfield, and from Paris, revealing the darkness of the system that lighted those fires, and, by contrast, the beauty and the glory of those principles for which the martyrs suffered. I had thought that Satan had at last discovered that persecution was a great blunder, and during many hundred years had laid aside the weapon as an obsolete and worthless one; for surely he must have found out what we are convinced of, that persecution never built up a good cause, and never yet pulled down a bad one. But he is not weary of it; it flourished in the Inquisition in Spain—it has found an exponent in the diocese of Exeter; and whether persecution is wielded by Hildebrand, bishop of Rome, or by Henry, bishop of Exeter, it is the same Satanic weapon, unsanctioned by God, repudiated in the Gospel, denounced with all the anathemas of the word of God. Christianity repudiates persecution; it scorns the bribe of the treasury;

it rejects the bayonet of the soldier ; it seeks to triumph by truth ; and if it cannot triumph by truth, it will lie down as a martyr, and wait for brighter and for better times.

The last weapon that Satan wields to which I shall allude is a favourite one, and a very effective one — it is that of divisions, disputes, and quarrels among the people of God. And what evidences the Satanic nature of the weapon is this simple fact, that Christian fights with Christian with intenser antipathy than Christian fights with infidel, or Protestant with Romanist. It is a very painful fact, but a very true one, that the more microscopic the difference is the mightier becomes the quarrel ; so much so, that if you find two Christians of different denominations quarrelling very bitterly, you may always calculate that the subject of the quarrel is some minute and microscopic point which neither of them clearly understands. Combatants get angry in proportion as they fail to comprehend each other. Wherever Satan sees a Church promising to grow in prosperity, in purity, and in power, he casts in the firebrand of contention, throws down some apple of discord, and makes those who ought to be rivals only in renown, but brethren in arms, fight and quarrel with each other, weaken their strength by divisions, injure their hearts by unhallowed passions, until the Church that has survived the flames of a Nero and the persecutions of a Hildebrand, pines and dwindles into a weak and insignificant thing by the fever of its own unsanctified and unhallowed passions.

Having looked then at one side and noticed its weapons, let us look at the other side, and see what weapons are employed there.

Christ might have crushed Satan many hundred years ago, and he might crush all his followers, by the simple fiat of his word or the touch of his omnipotent hand. But he has not done so. It is plainly to his glory that he should not do so. There is power in heaven to crush all opposition, but that power is not yet wielded, or he might confine Satan to his own place, and human passions he might suffer to smoulder in the bosom of him who is their victim, without allowing them to burst forth and kindle contentions among the people or in the sanctuary of God. But he does not do this. He restrains and regulates the wrath of

man, but he does not bury it. Chains are prepared, but not yet applied to Satan, for the last day, when he shall be chained a thousand years, and cast with them that are his into the lake of fire. Now each weapon wielded on the one side is the counterpart of that which is wielded on the other. The first and great weapon used by Christ is truth. Satan works by a lie, Christ prevails by the truth. His truth scatters the delusion of the world — dissipates the dream of the carnal heart — breaks down the presumption of the ignorant — illuminates the despair of the desponding, and the maxim so often proclaimed by all parties is more and more felt to be right: "Great is truth, and it will prevail." Truth may be silent in its action, but it is sure of ultimate success. It falls with all the silence of the dew, but it penetrates also like the dew till the earth is saturated with its precious influence.

In the second place, Christ works by and wields the weapon of motives and suggestions. I have said that Satan uses temptations, so Christ employs motives and suggestions. Christ speaks to us as reasonable men, saying — "Judge whether these things are so." Christianity will stand the test of the severest logic, the ordeal of the hottest crucible; and when Christ employs such motives and suggestions he sets before us the wrecks recorded in the past as beacons to warn us from danger, and points to the hopes of the future as rewards to encourage our exertions in his cause. He plants motives in the heart, and hangs out glorious hopes to animate the soul; he appeals to our understanding, and convinces us by the plainest and most cogent reasons that Christianity is true, that the Gospel is the power of God, that the hopes of heaven are based upon immutable truth.

In the third place, Christ uses instruments also. Some of these instruments are angels coming from their starry thrones to minister to them that are the heirs of salvation. Other instruments are faithful ministers preaching the everlasting Gospel. Others, and not less effective ones, are Sabbath-school teachers, tract distributors, Bible colporteurs, missionary societies, at home and abroad, and the press when it comes to be wielded for the glory of God, the advancement of truth, and the salvation of souls. And no man whose eyes are open to the wonderful events which

have taken place during the last fifty years can doubt that Satan, if he gains ground in some places, is losing his footing day by day in other places where he was formerly supreme; and that instruments which once acted against the progress of truth, now facilitate the onward march of the everlasting Gospel.

Christ also uses providential arrangement. I am one of those who believe that there is no chance. I believe this to be literally true,—that there is not a hair which falls from an old man's head, nor a tear from a babe's eye, that is not under the surveillance of Him who wields the mightiest and controls the weakest things. I believe, that providential arrangements of every kind are weapons wielded by the hand of Christ, in order to promote his own wise and gracious purposes. I ask you, has not the sick-bed on which you have lain, and wept, and sorrowed, been sanctified to you? Has not the departure of the near and dear led you to fill the chasm left behind with him who is better than father and mother, and sister, and brother, and son, and daughter? Have not the events of Providence so acted upon you that your own will has been crossed and your own purposes reversed; so much so, that you have found a Saviour where you went to seek only a fortune? More than one Saul sets out to persecute, and returns to preach and pray. No one fact occurs in Providence which has not its mission. There is no one change in your house, in your shop, in your counting-house, in your trade, in your profession, which is not giving to you an impulse, it may be, lasting as heaven and precious as salvation itself. Thus Jesus works, and, in the language of the Apostle, "makes all things," not *some things*, but "*all things*, work together for good," beneficent, and holy purposes.

Another weapon that Christ wields is meekness. I believe that one of the sublimest prescriptions in the Gospel is, "Overcome evil with good." Did you ever try this prescription? If you have tried it, you know that the victory is certain without, and the comfort within is beyond the power of language to express. "Overcome evil with good" is God's way. When Adam sinned, God overcame Adam's sin by preaching to him the Gospel. And when some one sins against you, or offends you by his conduct, overcome the evil that is in him by the counter-manifesta-

tion of beneficence and good. Thus Christ overcame the world. Thus weakness overcomes might, meekness overcomes violence, long-suffering overcomes wrath; and the things that men pronounce weak are found to be mighty, and the things that men pronounce to be mighty are found to be weak; "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds" of the man of sin.

Christ wars and overcomes by the Spirit of truth. The Holy Spirit is given to the believer, first, as the Spirit of truth; next, as the Spirit of comfort; and lastly, as the Spirit of victory. Our safety in peril, our stability in trial, our progress, our consistency, our consolation, our greatest victories, our most rapid progress, are "not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts."

And now, having noticed the two parties, Satan, and them that are his, Christ, and them that are his, let me state that the issue of this conflict is absolutely certain. Let us all recollect, (for this is our comfort,) that the issue of this strife is not problematical. Satan shall be chained a thousand years, during which the Church shall enjoy peace and uninterrupted tranquillity; and after these thousand years have closed, and he has made his last and dying struggle to overthrow the saints of the Most High, he, and those whom he has deceived and made the victims of his wiles, shall be cast into the lake that burneth with fire for ever and ever: "And the kingdoms of this world," it is written by one to whom all was revealed, "shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Then this earth, which has so long been a battlefield — which has been torn and rent by a thousand conflicts — which now groans in agony, waiting and longing to be delivered, shall also be the scene of victory; it shall no more be unclean or common in the estimate of men; the curse that is on it shall be reversed and read backwards, and the great High Priest shall come out from his holy place, spread his hands over its length and its breadth, and shall pronounce upon it a blessing which shall descend to creation's depth, and rise up to creation's heights, and the whole earth shall put off its ashen robes, and put on its Easter garments, and become the beauty, the joy, and the glory of the universe of God. Every object, in that day, shall shine with Deity; every event shall be the chariot of his mercies; all

places shall be holy, for God's hallowing touch shall be upon its length and upon its breadth, and the Lord shall bless it, and all shall be blessed in him.

I have thus looked at the conflict upon the wide world. It is possible to be interested in such a conflict as one is interested in the conflict with the Sikhs or with the Affghans, and yet to have no personal feeling of sympathy or interest in it. Let me, therefore, narrow the field of contest, and let me show you before I close, that besides this great conflict which overspreads the earth, there is one going on in another and a smaller field; but a field more precious to me, and to each of you, than all the world and all its treasures besides. Each Christian's bosom is the stage of a contest. Satan has a footing in a saint just as truly as he has in the sinner whom he has made his victim. If there be no conflict in your bosom, then the great antagonistic principle of truth has not come into contact with the previous dominant antagonism of error: it is evidenced that you are not a Christian. But the man who is struggling to crush the evil that is in him—who is crying out in the agony of his heart, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—who can say, "I feel a law in my members warring against the law of my spirit, but thanks be to God, who," in the hottest conflict, and after the hardest struggle, "giveth me the victory"—that man, and such as he, is the child of God.

Now we are told that there are three great enemies with whom the individual Christian has to grapple in this narrow field: these are the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with each of these foes he has to wage war. Let me look very briefly at the first—the world. What is the difference between sin in a Christian and sin in a worldling? It is simply this, that sin lives in a Christian, while a worldling lives in sin. There is briefly the difference—sin lives in a Christian, but a Christian lives not in sin; sin lives in a worldling, and the worldling lives in sin. The difference between them is what I have pointed out before to you,—it is this: the distinction between sin in a Christian's heart and in an unconverted man's heart is just the distinction between poison in the body of a man and poison in the body of a rattlesnake. Poison in a man's body is felt to be an irritating, destructive, dis-

organizing element, which gives him no rest till he has got wholly rid of it; but poison in a rattlesnake is part of its nature, which helps it to defend itself from its foes, and to obtain its prey. So in a worldly man, sin is a favourite and a dear lodger; in a Christian man, sin is a hated intruder. In a worldly man sin overcomes the man, in a Christian the man overcomes the sin, and that through the strength of Jesus Christ who giveth him the victory. What then do I mean by the world? I do not mean those exquisite flowers that come unasked and beautify the opening year, nor its flowing streams, its sequestered glens, its lofty mountains—these are not the elements of the world. We mean that of which the Apostle tells us, that all that is in the world, “the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world;” and again, “The friendship of the world is enmity to God;” “Whosoever is the friend of the world is the enemy of God.” “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Now how does the Christian conquer the world? Not by personal and mechanical separation from the world, by seeking a footing in a distant shore or looking for a home in some desert land; but, on the contrary, by remaining in the world at the post where God has placed him, and there, in God’s strength, beating back the world, so that the world cannot overcome him. Superstition says, Overcome the world by running to a convent; Christianity says, Remain in the world, and yet be not of the world. Superstition says, Cast off the evidence that you are Christ’s, put down your shield, sheath your sword, run and seek shelter in order that you may not be destroyed by the world. Christianity says, You are a sentinel, the great Captain of the faith has placed you there,—there you must stand, taking the whole armour of God, and, having done all, stand. You are to contend with and overcome the smiles of the world, resolved not to be seduced by them; you are to contend with the frowns of the world, resolved not to be put down by them. You are to be patient in suffering, thankful in prosperity, Christian in all things, so shall your least and your loftiest struggles be crowned with success, while you are making your lowly and protracted pilgrimage from earth to immortality—so in the world you overcome the world, and are not of the world. Let me give you an

illustration from the Apostle Paul, to show how a Christian man, wherever he is, will always keep this one object predominant. Do not too many Christians now, when they go across to the Continent, leave all their Christianity on this side the Channel, and indulge in all the pomps, the vanities, and the amusements of a dissipated capital? Many that go to Athens or to Rome, or to other illustrious cities, think only of their splendid architecture, the beautiful paintings, the exquisite sculpture, and act as if they had forgotten that they had been baptized into the visible Church, and some of them called into the true and living Church of the Lamb. Let us look, by way of contrast, at the conduct of the Apostle Paul—one who was in the world and overcame it; he visited the most illustrious capital on the earth—that capital which was called the Eye of Greece, the University of the World, whose fanes were unrivalled for their beauty, whose academy was the retreat of wisdom; by the banks of whose Ilissus a Socrates, a Plato, a Xenophon, and the most illustrious of mankind daily and hourly trod. The Apostle had taste, genius, education, talent; he had, to use the modern phrase, “æsthetical culture,” just as much as any of those who have claimed a monopoly of it. But when he went to Athens, he saw none of its splendours; he was captivated by nothing of its beauty, he turned his back upon its temples, and its schools, and its lofty halls, and its glorious monuments, and he saw in that clear light which came down from heaven, but one painful and terrible spectacle—a city wholly given to idolatry; its moral ruin overpowered in his mind all its artistic magnificence.

Here was one who was in the world, and a victor over it. This Paul, too, we read, went to Rome; and when there, I have no doubt he paused in the senate, if peradventure he might hear the echoes of that eloquence which thrilled and captivated the world. He climbed the lofty Capitol, that he might look around him on that glorious panorama of all that was splendid, and beautiful, and mighty. He saw the fasces—those awful symbols of departed justice; he could admire the graceful pillar, and look with reverence on the patriot’s tomb, and with delight on the clustering columns; but these occupied little of his time or attention. His daily walks, we read, were not where history has shed its

splendours, but in the haunts of the hated Hebrew, amid the abodes of the wretched and miserable slave, by the pallet of the sick and the bed of the dying, among the victims of oppression and tyranny, of poverty and want. He held it to be his greatest glory, not that he had pleaded before princes, but that he had preached the Gospel to paupers; not that he had paced the illustrious forum, but that he had illuminated with the bright beams of the Gospel the souls of the dying, and taught the outcasts of humanity that they had sympathies in a human heart, consolation in Christ, and a home in heaven. What a noble instance of one who had taste, and sacrificed it; who had æsthetic sympathy, and put it down; who could admire the beautiful, applaud the glorious, be charmed with the grand; but live and die, and labour and suffer, only to save souls!

We, too, must be crucified to the world — we must thus overcome the world; some things in it we must repudiate, other things we must subordinate, many more things in it we must sacrifice. Conflict is the characteristic of this dispensation; our carnal taste would prefer the beautiful knoll in which we could lie down, and muse, and meditate; but Christ, by the voice of his Gospel, or by the dispensations of his providence, keeps us still on the march. We should prefer, no doubt, to pass to heaven in an easy chair, or in a finely-hung chariot; but, blessed be God, he does not allow us to do so. He opens the grassy seat, on which we sit down in indolent repose, to receive the dead dust of the near and the dear; or he enters the place which we had called our home, and of which we had declared in our folly, "Here we will rest and be happy for ever," and makes the flowers that are brightest in it fade, and the sounds that were music to become discord, and a voice pierce the inmost depths of our heart, saying to us, "Arise! this is not our rest; there remaineth a rest for the people of God." We have a battle to fight: the "Battle of Life" is the name of a Christian's mission. To restrain appetites, to purify our affections, to sanctify our natures, to direct the eye of our ambition to a throne beyond the stars, to invigorate the intellect and transform and elevate our hearts, to save the soul — this is the great object of the Gospel. We are here as soldiers; to serve Christ is our mission, to over-

come the world is our duty ; the reward, promised to this Church, is, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

My dear friends, are you on the Lord's side? Have you taken your place? I trust that many a Christian in this assembly can say, "O Lord Jesus, I have been often beaten in the battle of life; I have often fainted and given way; I have often fallen before the foe: but oh, my Lord, thou knowest that my heart cleaves to thee; thou knowest my resolve that thy side shall be my side, thy God my God, thy people my people; thou knowest that it is my prayer that I may know thee more, that I may love thee more, that I may serve thee better; and in thy strength, my Lord and my God, I will arise from the depression I have suffered, and the discredit I have brought upon thee; I will redeem the time, by thy grace, and I will endeavour to compensate, as far as compensation can be made below, by the splendour of my victories, for the defects and deficiencies, and worldliness and sinfulness, of the days that are past." He that can say so, and say so not with feigned lips but from the depths of his heart, has a principle within him which is mighty in power, and the spring of which shall not cease till grace is lost in glory, and struggle in everlasting victory.

LECTURE IX.

THE SOLDIERS OF CHRIST.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”—REV. ii. 7.

WHEN I addressed you from these words last Lord's-day evening, I showed that the word “overcome” implies by its very nature a previous battle. I endeavoured to describe what I conceived to be, indeed, the “Battle of Life,” by referring to the powers that are engaged in the conflict, and the weapons which they respectively wield. I stated that on the one side, whatever may be their names, ranked under one banner are all the followers of Satan, all that sympathise with him, and reject and repudiate like him the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other side are arrayed all who belong to Christ, whose characteristics as his soldiers I am about to describe. Christ might crush Satan by the stroke of his omnipotence, but he does not do so; he suffers him occasionally to prevail, but only as preparatory to his final and utter overthrow. I showed you that Satan, and they that are on his side, use such weapons as *deception* — Satan is “a liar,” we are told, “and the father of it;” *temptation* — he has access to our hearts; I believe he has a longer tether and greater power than our philosophers are disposed to admit; he is “the Prince of this world;” he is not omnipotent, but he goes about with ceaseless activity, “as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour;” at the same time I believe he has the archangel's wisdom and the archangel's power, both inspired and strengthened by the demon's depravity and wickedness; and therefore we war “not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers and spiritual wick-

edness in high places." I do not think we can account for the fearful crimes that occasionally stain our history, or the gigantic criminals that sometimes appear in our calendars, except by supposing the action of diabolic power. Another Satanic weapon is *wicked instruments*; a fourth is the corruption of what is good. Hypocrisy is virtue depraved, or vice putting on the external appearance and form of virtue; Popery is Christ's truth perverted — the stones that were intended for a holy temple built into an unholy one. Satan employs persecution also. This was a favourite weapon during the first three centuries, and afterwards during the mediæval ages, towards the dawn of the Reformation; and perhaps before this dispensation closes it will be wielded once more, especially when that sifting time arrives which will test who are Christ's that overcome, and who are Satan's that are overcome. In contrast with this, Christ and his people use their weapons; the first of these I stated to be truth. Christ will triumph in the world, not by the force of omnipotence — that would be the nearest approach to persecution; nor will he triumph by policy — that would be stealing a leaf from the book of Satan; but by truth. Christianity repudiates the bribe of the treasury and the bayonet of the soldier; it will triumph by the use of truth, or it will lie down and die a martyr. Another of Christ's weapons is meekness, patience, forbearance, overcoming evil with good, "heaping coals of fire," to avenge the wrong of the wrongdoer; another is the preaching of the Gospel by human instrumentality; and lastly, the most powerful weapon of all, if weapon it may be called — the Holy Spirit of God. The victory is "not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts." The man who is overcome in this battle will feel it as the gnawing worm that never dies, that the defeat was wickedly and wilfully incurred; and the man who overcomes in this contest will feel, and sing in songs of triumph what he feels, through the ages of eternity, that the victory was "not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts."

I come now to answer the question which may be asked, Who are those that overcome? in other words, to endeavour to delineate Christ's soldiers. I will describe them first of all negatively. There are certain parties of whom it may be positively stated that

they are not fighting under Christ's banner : an atheist, for instance, cannot be said either to act under the banner or to overcome by using the weapons of the Christian warfare. He regards Revelation as an imposture—the Bible as a cunningly devised fable—the hope of immortality as a maniac's dream—the soul and a judgment seat as mere human fancies ; it cannot be said, therefore, that he is enlisted under Christ's banner, or that he can hope to overcome : he is avowedly on the opposite side. Nor can it be said, in the second place, that the Romanist, or any who sympathise with him, and bear the mark of the beast in their hand or on their forehead, is fighting under the conquering banner of Christ. The very name given in Scripture to the power for which the Romanist seeks to achieve the victory is Antichrist, one who is allied to and fighting on the other side. With him the Church is a Saviour, the merits of saints and the sacrifices of priests are his hope ; the essence of his worship is idolatry—the foundation of his trust is falsehood—the hope of his happiness is purgatory at the best, not heaven and everlasting glory through the grace of Christ Jesus. In the third place, I may state that those who are Christ's soldiers—who overcome—are not all nominally churchmen ; whether English or Scotch, Episcopalian or Presbyterian, it is possible to be owned by the state and to be disowned by Christ ; it is quite possible to be under the lustre of our beloved Queen Victoria's crown, and yet to be a stranger to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is quite possible to be sustained by acts of parliament, and yet not to be canonized by the acts of Apostles ; to be a churchman higher than the highest steeple, and yet not to have the affections which cluster around the throne of glory, and find their nutriment in the bosom of God. Not, therefore, all churchmen are Christ's soldiers and overcome. But let me deal even-handed justice ; not all dissenters are necessarily under the banner of Christ, and therefore overcome. There may be great zeal for the sect, there may be none for Christ. Hatred to a particular church is not necessarily love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember that it is perfectly possible to hate the endowments of the state, and yet to cleave to all the sins and the evil practices of the guiltiest sinner. It is not, therefore, true that every dissenter any more than every

churchman is saved. It is not absolutely and infallibly true that all dissenters are Christ's soldiers, any more than that all churchmen are so. It is seasonable to say so. Let me add, too, that not all archbishops, and bishops, and ministers, are necessarily on Christ's side. Many a man has professed to be moved by the Spirit of God to take upon him the work of the ministry, who has only been moved by the prospect of a rich benefice, or by the hope of a position in society. Many a man glories in the apostolical succession who has never learned, and cannot, therefore, preach the elements of apostolic doctrine. It is quite possible to be an archbishop and yet not to be a Christian: men may be, in any communion, the priests and the ministers of the Lord by profession, and yet not be the children of God. Souls pass to the depths of ruin from the pulpit as well as from the pew. The loftier the pinnacle on which the minister stands, the more terrible the catastrophe into which his wickedness or criminality, or his unfaithfulness may plunge him. Not all learned men, or rich men, or noblemen, are necessarily upon Christ's side. It is possible to wear a coronet and yet not have any lot or part in the cross of Christ: it is possible to have sprung from an ancient and illustrious lineage, and yet not be the sons of God. There are noblemen in eternal perdition just as well as plebeians: there are emperors and kings and prime ministers there just as well as peasants and mechanics. Nay, God's word tells us—and when we use its words, we speak not uncharitably, but faithfully,—“not many noble, not many mighty, not many great are called.” If you ask for evidence of it, the answer is, that the great majority of our congregations—they that sustain our missionary societies, that support our Bible societies, that contribute to the maintenance of the ministry—are the masses of the people; though we thank God that in the present day many who are noble are stepping down from their dignity in which they isolated themselves of old, and are coming into the midst of the people; and these nobles—such as the Duke of Buccleugh, Duke of Argyle, Lord Ashley, Lord Kinnaird, Lord Roden, Lord Ducie, and others, are gathering round them the sympathy and affection of a devoted and loyal people. Never is greatness so secure as when it is allied to goodness; and never are noblemen so noble indeed, as

when they lend all they are and all they have to the maintenance of that cause which had a cross and carpenter's son for its commencement, but has a throne of glory and the Prince of the kings of the earth for its blessed and certain issue.

Not all the baptized are Christ's soldiers and fighting under his banner. What terrible deception prevails among thousands in this one respect! How many tell you in the prison where their crimes have placed them, that they have been regenerated and renewed because they have been baptized! In the face of fact they assert so—in the face of the word of God they assert so; for we are told there that a man may be a "Jew outwardly," but not a "Jew indeed." "Circumcision," we are warned, "is not of the letter, but of the spirit." I believe that there are two great fatal errors on this point; and here you will see where all the essence of Popery lies. What does the Roman Catholic church daily and hourly do? It declares that the bread upon the altar is indeed the literal flesh and blood, soul and divinity, of the Lord Jesus Christ; in other words, that the priest offers up Christ bodily. What does the Tractarian divine do? He just does with Baptism what the Roman Catholic has done with the Lord's Supper. He says practically that the water is turned into the Holy Spirit of God. The Romanist says the Eucharist is turned into the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ. The Tractarian says, by implication at least, the water in the baptismal font is turned into the Holy Spirit. The Romanist wishes to change the bread into Christ as the foundation of his righteousness; the Tractarian wishes to change the water into the Spirit of God as the foundation of his regeneration. But is it the fact that the one is thus justified or the other thus sanctified? Ask the chaplains of our goals—ask the keepers and turnkeys of our prisons; and they will tell you that those goals and bridewells are crowded by men who have been sprinkled by baptism, as well as those who have not been baptized; those who think they have received this rite from the true succession, and those that never dreamed of it; giving clear and irresistible evidence that you may be baptized in any form that the genius of man can devise, but unless the Spirit of God change the heart, you have but a name to live by, whilst you are dead. The great cause, I believe,

of the error on the subject of baptism has arisen from a gross misconception of the real state of man. Man, by the fall, as I have often said before, has not merely come under a slight aberration from his original state: if the fall in paradise were simply a blow that stunned humanity, then, certainly, I do not see why a little water sprinkled upon his brow should not revive, resuscitate, and restore, and enable him to walk with God again, as Adam walked with him in paradise; but if the statement of God's word be true, that it is not a mere stun that has come upon humanity, but that man is dead in trespasses and sins, then I appeal to your common sense for an answer to my query, Who can raise the dead? None but that voice which shall ring through the graves of the dead, and echo in the homes of the living, and raise the dead and change the living, can quicken man's dead soul, and give a new heart, and restore us to God, to holiness, and to happiness. Not, therefore, all the baptized are Christ's soldiers and gain this victory: and, in the next place, let me add, not every communicant is enlisted under Christ's banner. There are worthy and there are unworthy communicants; there are those who come, in the language of Augustine, and drink that wine with their lips and eat that bread with their teeth, but never receive the blessing nor the benefit of the purchase of the cross of Christ. You may depend on it that there has not been since Christ instituted the Lord's Supper a pure communion-table, nor will there be while it lasts; and therefore, if, instead of getting agitated and plunging into all sorts of extravagances in order to find the pure Church, you would pray, each for himself, that the Spirit of God would renew your own hearts, the pure Church would be far more quickly hastened than by the process that many now pursue. Not all communicants, then, are the people of God; because there are unworthy as well as worthy communicants. In short, not all that seem outwardly the children of God are so really. It is perfectly possible to attend religious meetings in the month of May, in Exeter Hall, to read and support religious newspapers, and yet not be Christians; it is perfectly possible to contribute largely to the spread of the Gospel and the maintenance of its machinery, and to do it from false motives and for impure and unhallowed ends: in one

word, to have a name to live by and yet to be dead—to have the form of godliness without its power—to be eulogized by man as the very perfection of Christianity, and yet to be denounced in heaven as an alien and a stranger to the cross, and an ally of Satan, and an enemy of Christ.

I have thus, then, shown you the negative signs—those who are not under Christ's banner, and who therefore cannot be said to overcome; let me now endeavour to show you, in the next place, the positive signs of those who do overcome, and who therefore obtain a right to the tree of life. I quote two texts extremely expressive on this point; they are from the Epistles of John: "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." And again he says in another place, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" You must have noticed, in reading the Epistles of John—written by the same hand that wrote the Apocalypse, and inspired by the same Holy Spirit,—that the victory over the world, the victory over sin and Satan, is to be achieved mainly, if not wholly, through the instrumentality of faith. That man, therefore, who has true and lively faith in God—who has trust and confidence in Christ Jesus—who receives His word and rests upon it—who leans upon His sacrifice—who obeys His commandments—who anticipates His future glory—he has the victory that overcometh the world. You may ask, perhaps, In what respect does faith enable us to overcome the world? I answer, it is thus: "Faith reveals to us things which are invisible to sense; for the eye, and the ear, and the touch come in contact only with things material and above the horizon by which our world is bounded; but faith sees beyond the horizon; its eye penetrates the ever-involving clouds, and beholds in the midst of the battle, God its Father, Christ its Saviour, the Holy Spirit its Sanctifier; and it becomes so real to a Christian, that this faith is to him "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And so it enables him to overcome the world.

Again, faith is thus an element of victory, because it shows to the Christian greater excellences in his Lord, and in the Gospel which that Lord has revealed than in all the world besides.

When sense loses friends, and money, and estates, it sits down and weeps, and despairs or commits suicide. When faith loses the world, or money, or friends, or home, it then begins to sing the pæan of victory, which shall be perpetuated in the realms of glory, and which was begun by Christ when he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Here now is faith, which is the victory that overcometh the world. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; though the labour of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; though the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls;"—a Stoic would say, "I will neither feel nor mourn;" the Epicurean would say, "I will make the best of it, and try to get something else as a substitute for what I have lost;" humanity would sit down, and wring its hands, and despond; but Christianity spreads her wings, and lifts her heart, and says what the inspiration of her God alone, and faith in that God, can help her to sing,—"yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the God of my salvation." And this faith is the victory that overcomes the world. Faith is to the soul what the telescope is to the eye; it brings things that are remote to be as though they were near. Hence, when there is true faith in the Christian's heart, it enables him to see that God is not a distant God, but a near God; that Christ is not a distant Saviour, but a near Saviour; that the Holy Ghost is not a distant Sanctifier, but a Sanctifier within him; that things which are distant to his sense are near as they are dear to a Christian's heart. And thus faith enables him, looking upon eternity as near, to tread down time as insignificant in comparison.

But there is another characteristic of faith, that accounts for its being the victory that overcomes the world. Faith has been called by old divines "the appropriating grace." It is that grace which receives and appropriates to itself all that God has made known; and if it does so, it needs no great calculation to show you that such faith must overcome the world. Faith sees God as my Father—Christ as my Saviour—the Spirit as my Sanctifier—heaven as my home—eternity as my hope;—Christ's strength as mine to sustain me—Christ's wisdom as mine to guide me—Christ's heart as mine to sympathise with me—Christ's wing as

mine to shelter me;—and thus faith becomes the victory that overcomes the world.

Again, faith triumphs in difficulties; the greater the difficulty, the more faith triumphs. It is the law of sense, that the greater the difficulty the more it desponds; it is the law of faith, that the greater the difficulty the more manfully it meets it. Thus, for instance, sense says, "My sins are like the crimson in their dye, and like the purple in their hue, and I have therefore no hope of heaven." Faith replies, "Though your sins be like crimson, they shall be as wool; and though they be as purple, they shall be as white as snow." Sense says, "Heaven is far away, and I do not know the road, and shall stumble in the way, or I shall miss the path, and I shall never get to heaven." Faith answers, in the tones her Master taught her, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." God says, "Sarah shall have a son;" sense bursts into laughter at the absurdity of it; faith believes the promise, and Abraham becomes the father of all them that believe. Sense says, "We do not know what to do;" but faith says, "Our eyes are toward God;" and God answers from the skies, what faith returns in echoes of triumph, "Stand still, and see the salvation of God."

Thus it is, then, that faith is the victory that overcomes the world. I would only state to you, that if you wish to see the idea of which I have given you the merest outline worked out with great power, great splendour of imagery, great depth of thought, let me ask you to read Archdeacon Hare's "Victory of Faith." It is a work full of rich and beautiful thought. Some things there are in it, perhaps, about which we may differ, but it is, in the main, admirably calculated to edify and instruct. He and Trench, and others, constitute a new type or class of divines who are appearing in the Church of England. I hope they will not lean too much, as it is feared some do, towards Germany, as the divines on the other side lean too far towards Rome. Perhaps it is God's design that they shall balance each other, and that the result shall be the old evangelical truth proclaimed by a Latimer, preached and riveted by a Cranmer, and, blessed be God, found in all denominations of true Christians at this mo-

ment, and so a revival greater than ever has been since the blessed Reformation.

I need not quote to you instances of those who by faith have overcome the world. Abel is one of the earliest specimens. Cain, personating sense, presented on the altar the loveliest flowers, and thought that, from their fragrance and their beauty, these would be the best sacrifice. Faith, in Abel, conscious of its sins, took a lamb and shed its blood, because it trusted in the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. Enoch overcame the world, for he walked with God amidst the opposition of the world. Noah overcame the world, for he believed God when the world laughed at his predictions, and built the ark whilst the world uttered its sneers, overcoming the world by faith. Abraham overcame the world, when he left his own land and went forth not knowing whither he was going, only knowing this, that God had prepared for him a city in the skies, whose builder and maker is God. Moses overcame the world when he refused to be called a monarch's son, and despised the riches which would accrue from being connected with a monarch's prime minister, preferring, nobly preferring, affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin that were but for a season.

But let me explain one or two more of the features of the soldiers of Christ. First, we are told in Scripture, that those who belong to Christ and overcome the world are they who are "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world." If you ask me to explain the doctrine of election—I answer, I cannot; if you ask me to harmonize it with man's responsibility—I cannot. I read this, and I cannot dispute it—"chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world;" not because God foreknew they would be holy, but in order that they might be holy. And again: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Only suffer me to say, that election in the Bible and election in our Scotch confession of faith seem to me very differently stated, though, no doubt, they mean the same thing. The one is hard, dry, and metaphysical, almost rationalistic—the other always accompanied with great practical truths, and solemn responsibilities and duties;

the one man's planting, the other God's inspiring. Those, then, that overcome the world are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; and, secondly, they who are on Christ's side, and overcome the world, are "purchased by Christ." You are not your own; you are redeemed with the precious blood of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. What a solemn truth is this! We are not our own. Man says, "I can do what I like with my own." You have just one thing that is your own, and that one thing is your sin. Your souls are not your own, for God says, "All souls are mine." Your life is not your own, you cannot fix the day when you will give it up, and no human being fixed the day when that life was bestowed. I have often thought that when man is awake he feels that his life is his own; but when you lie down and fall asleep, does it not seem to you as if you had let go your grasp of life—as if your life were then loose, as it were? When you retire to bed in the evening, it seems the foretaste of death—then you let go life, and it remains with God whether your heart shall beat in eternity or beat in time the next day. We are not our own. Your money is not your own; the image and the superscription of Christ is on it all. Your influence is not your own. We are stewards, not proprietors; we have not even a lease of anything; we are tenants from year to year, from month to month, from day to day. We have no lease of life, still less a freehold; we have no inherent property in anything we possess. God puts his hand into the midst of them, but (blessed be his name!) it is a Father's hand, and takes the lamb from the midst of your family into his own bosom; he commands the hurricane to enter your shop or your counting-house, and sweeps from you, because he has other uses for it, all you have accumulated. God sends his angel, who breathes upon you as he passes, and you are laid upon a sick-bed. Nothing is our own; all is God's; the responsibility only is ours of consecrating it to his glory, or desecrating it to the service of sin, of Satan, and of the world.

Again, those who are on Christ's side and fighting under his banner, and who have overcome the world, are those who have fled to him and sought acceptance from him through his precious blood. A Christian is one running from himself, and seeking

refuge in Jesus — who rests upon the cross — who believes in Jesus — who has confidence in the Bible, and expects, through that confidence in him, forgiveness of sin, holiness, happiness, and joy. What a blessed truth is that, that God is our Father! I sometimes wish I could invent a few new words, in order to express more fully and forcibly my ideas. I am perfectly sure of this, that much of our sermons fail in their purpose, just because the words in which we express our ideas are so common that they roll off like dew-drops from the green leaf, without leaving the least lasting impression behind. The words we employ are so common, so hackneyed, that we fail to perceive the expressiveness and beauty of the meaning. Let us try to realise this thought, that God is our Father, loving us infinitely more than we ever can or shall love him. It is worthy of observation, that all affections grow intenser in their descent, not in their ascent; a father loves his child far more strongly than that child loves its father. Now, God is the great Father—he is our Father; and that Father would do for us infinitely more than you fathers, being evil, would do for your children. He himself tells you, “If ye, being evil,” with all your sins, with all your imperfections, with all your passions, with all your prejudices, “will give good gifts to your children,” because you love them, “how much more will your Father who is in heaven give” — what? not faith, not grace, not glory, but Deity himself, “the Holy Spirit, unto them that ask him?” What a precious truth is this! May we realise it, make it our own, and live upon it; and so our life will be the blessed life.

And in the next place, they that are Christ’s soldiers, and conquer in his strength, are those that cleave to Christ’s word. I look upon this as a most important test in the present day; it may be that articles are good, that confessions of faith are good, that liturgies are expedient; this may be; but it is quite certain that no articles, nor creed, nor confession, nor liturgy is fit to be the rule of faith. God’s word alone is our directory. Whatever is within the boards of the Bible is obligatory upon you and me, as if God bowed the heavens and spoke at this moment. Whatever is outside the boards of the Bible, however popular, however plausible, however eloquent, you may receive or you may reject

as you please, it does not touch your responsibility to God, or your hopes of everlasting happiness. The Christian takes God's word as his infallible directory, as his lamp from the throne shining in a dark place. He receives it not as a dogma for discussion, as a theory for dispute, as a problem for solution, but as a truth for hearty reception. Hence, it has always seemed to me the essence of folly, to hear a man open the Bible, and say, God says this, and now I will prove it to you. What is the use of proving what God has said? We prove propositions that are human: we accept truths that are divine. We may elucidate or explain, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, but to say, This is my text, and I will now prove it, is to bring a glow-worm to add to the splendours of the meridian sun, the conjectures of man to strengthen the testimony of God. Hence, those that are Christ's soldiers, and fight under his banner, cleave close to his word, and evermore appeal to it in all those disputes in which one good man says this, and another good man says that. The old Scotch Covenanter's request on hearing a theological controversy, "Rax me the Bible," was truly Protestant. If the controverted dogma be not there, it is no concern of ours: if it be there, bow before it as an order from the Most High, and fear not the silly charge of bibliolatry.

And the last feature I will notice of those who are Christ's soldiers is, they love the Saviour with all their heart; and when there is love in the heart, there is always light in the head, and direction to the feet, because they that love Christ need no diagram of duty, no human directory, no binding law, for love is the fulfilment of the law. Those who are thus fighting under Christ's banner are some in Europe, some in Asia, some in Africa, some in America, some in Australia; some are on the Equator in burning sands and parched deserts, or amid the frozen ledges of Iceland, or in the regions of perpetual snow; colour and clime have nothing to do with God's relationship to us, or our relationship to him. Some are in palaces, some in huts, some in catacombs, some in prisons, some in subterranean mines; some are upon the steppes of Tartary, and some on the mountains of Switzerland; some, like Abel, were neither circumcised nor baptized; some, like David, were circumcised but not baptized; some, like

Paul, were both circumcised and baptized; and some, like Luther, baptized, but not circumcised; and some, with no baptism of man, but with the consecration of the Spirit of God.

Such are sure of the victory. Christ intercedes for them; the Spirit intercedes within them; angels minister to them; all things work for their good; circumstances may vary their condition, but they cannot rend their union and communion with their Lord. Sodom blazes behind them, but Jerusalem shines before them from afar, and all the thunders and the voices and the cries of dissolving dynasties and crumbling thrones are but the settling, not the overturning of the foundation, on which they stand secure as beneath the shadow of the omnipotence of God.

Now, those who are on Christ's side and thus overcome, shall, it is said, be admitted to the tree of life. This tree I have described in previous lectures,* and I need not, therefore, repeat anything I have said. I merely add this, that that tree which was lost in Paradise the first, shall be replanted and bloom for ever in Paradise the second. The meaning of the promise is, that they who believe in Jesus and overcome the world through his blood, shall partake of and inherit unceasing, everlasting life. It denotes the perpetuity of this life, "they shall live for ever and ever." No wintry cloud shall overshadow them, no earthquake or hurricane shall uproot them, no lightning shall blast, and no tornado shall scathe them. The source of their life is beyond the reach of mutability or change. It denotes, too, nutriment. Man is a creature; the highest angel in heaven is a creature; he has no inward, inherent, aboriginal spring of life; and therefore the statement, that believers shall eat of the tree of life, denotes that in heaven their life shall be, what it was on earth, a derived life, not original and inherent. It may also denote that all believers shall gather round that central object and form one happy, holy, and inseparable group for ever. And the promise—"I will give unto him that overcometh to eat of the Tree of Life," is evidence that it is not of merit, but by grace.

And now let me notice, in closing my remarks upon the address

* See Apocalyptic Sketches, second series.

to the Ephesian Church, that the promise is here distinct from the rest of the epistle: It is said, "To *him* that overcometh," which shows that the Church itself would not overcome. He first states the excellences of the Church, he then mentions its deficiencies, and he says to her "that unless she repents he will remove her candlestick out of its place," *i. e.* he will cause her existence as a Church to cease. In order to show how this prediction has been fulfilled, I will read you a short account of the history and present state of that Church.

"EPHEBUS.—This celebrated city, anciently the metropolis of Proconsular Asia or Ionia, now called Natolia, was situated about forty miles south-east of Smyrna, and five miles from the Ægean Sea, on the sides and at the foot of a range of mountains overlooking a fine plain, watered and fertilized by the river Cayster. It was considered a maritime city, and is said to have been built by Androclus, the son of Codrus, king of Athens, as early as the time of David. It henceforth occupied a distinguished place among the twelve confederated Ionian cities of Asia Minor. From the remotest period, Ephesus was celebrated for a temple of Diana, hence called the Ephesian goddess.

"The inhabitants of Ephesus were distinguished more by their voluptuousness and their traffic, than by their taste for learning or philosophy. They are also said to have been addicted to sorcery and such like arts. What were called the 'Ephesian letters' appear to have been magical symbols inscribed on the crown, girdle, and feet of the statue of Diana, in the great temple; and it was believed that whoever pronounced them had forthwith all that he desired. In the Apostolic times, Ephesus was in its glory, and its streets resounded with the shouts, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' (Acts xix. 28—34.) When St. Paul visited the city, and a tumult in consequence arose, the town-clerk, or principal magistrate, made the following speech:—'Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing, then, that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and do nothing rashly. For ye have brought hither these men, who

are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.' The tradition here referred to, that the image of Diana originally fell from heaven, has induced some to conjecture that it might have contained an *aërolite* or atmospheric stone; but the pretence was by no means peculiar to Ephesus. The Palladium of Troy, and the image of Minerva, were said to have dropped from the clouds, and the sacred shield of the Romans was given in a similar manner in the reign of Numa Pompilius. This imposture, zealously propagated by the mythological priests, that the statues at the shrines of which they ministered were the gifts of the celestial divinities, was early introduced into the Christian Church, when it became infected by the leaven of superstition, and the legends of the monkish writers of communications from the Virgin and the Apostles are not behind those which they imitated in pretensions to the miraculous. A similar origin to that of the Ephesian Diana has been claimed for the shrine of our Lady of Loretto, in Italy; and Pope John I. marched out of the city of Rome in solemn procession to receive a picture of the Virgin, which was devoutly believed to have been suspended in the air over the city for a considerable time.

"St. Paul resided at Ephesus for three years, and founded a Church (Acts xx. 31), which was sound in doctrine, and upright in discipline and practice during his life; but after the martyrdom of the Apostle, the Ephesian Church declined, and its bishop was solemnly warned to 'repent and do the first works.' Trophimus, an eminent disciple of St. Paul, who accompanied him on many of his journeys, was a native of Ephesus; and it is conjectured that Tychicus, the bearer of the Epistle to the Church, and of that to the Colossians, was so likewise. In A. D. 57, the Apostle, sailing from Assos to Tyre, appointed the elders and presbyters of the Ephesian Church to meet him at Miletus, at which port he intended to touch, not having time to visit their city. This interview was of an affecting nature, and evinces the strong attachment which his residence among them had produced. He told them on that occasion, that they would see his face no more — that after his departure, grievous wolves would enter in among the flock; and he anxiously exhorted those who had the oversight thereof, to feed the Church of God. (Acts xx. 28.)

“Irenæus and Eusebius relate a tradition, that St. John wrote his three Epistles at Ephesus, between the commencement of the Jewish war and the final subjugation of Palestine, when he first arrived and took up his residence in the city. Some of the Fathers affirm, that the beloved disciple was accompanied into Asia Minor by the Virgin Mary, who resided at Ephesus, where she is said to have been buried. In A. D. 142, Justin Martyr visited Ephesus, and held on that occasion his celebrated conversation on Christianity with Trypho, who is mentioned by Eusebius as the most eminent Jew of his time. At the close of the second century, we find Polycrates, the bishop of Ephesus, engaged in a controversy respecting the observance of Easter, which threatened the extinction of all kindly feeling between the parties.

“The celebrated story of the Seven Sleepers, related by Gibbon, is connected with Ephesus. During the furious persecution of the Christians carried on by the Emperor Decius, seven noble Ephesian youths concealed themselves in a cave in the neighbourhood of the city, where they were immured by the tyrant. ‘They immediately fell into a deep slumber,’ says Gibbon, ‘which was miraculously prolonged, without injuring the powers of life, during a period of one hundred and eighty-seven years. This popular tale, which Mohammed might have learned when he drove his camels to the fairs of Syria, is introduced as a Divine relation into the Koran. The story of the Seven Sleepers has been adopted and adorned by the nations from Bengal to Africa, who profess the Mohammedan religion, and some vestiges of a similar tradition have been discovered in the remote extremities of Scandinavia.’

“In A. D. 431, the heads of the Church, in obedience to the imperial mandate, repaired to Ephesus, and deposed Nestorius, the bishop of Constantinople. The prelate was degraded from his ecclesiastical dignities, and confined in a monastery. At the commencement of the sixth century, Ephesus, like other Asiatic Churches, had lost almost every trace of its ‘first love,’ and the streams of Divine truth circulated by St. Paul, St. John, and Polycarp, became gradually corrupted by error and superstition. ‘At this era,’ says Mr. Milner, ‘the number of monks multiplied prodigiously in the East, invited to inaction and repose by its

warm climate and sunny skies; and the myrtle-crowned valleys of Asia Minor were crowded with fanatics, eager to arrive at spiritual perfection by the constant practice of bodily ease. The north, with its snows and mountains, had indeed its monasteries, but the greatest hive was in the East, where the balmy breezes and ever-ripening fruits ministered to sensual gratification. The religious flocked to the plains of Syria to dream away existence, and the beautiful valleys of Greece and Anatolia swarmed with a race whose pretensions to piety were laziness and superstition.'

"In 1764, when Ephesus was visited by Dr. Chandler, 'its population consisted of a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility; the representatives of an illustrious people, and inhabiting the wreck of their greatness,—some, the substructure of the glorious edifices which they raised, some beneath the vaults of the stadium, once the crowded scene of their diversions. We heard the partridge call in the area of the theatre and of the stadium. The glorious pomp of its heathen worship is no longer remembered; and Christianity, which was there nursed by Apostles and fostered by general councils, until it increased to fulness of stature, barely lingers on in an existence hardly visible. On approaching it from the wretched village of Aiasaluch, a few scattered fragments of antiquity occur; and on the hill above, some traces of the former walls, and a solitary watch-tower, mark the extent of the city.

"At some distance are the remains of the theatre in which Demetrius raised the tumult against St. Paul; but of the once famous temple of Diana not a stone is seen, except perhaps a few arches on the morass, which are conjectured to have supported it. 'A more thorough change,' says Mr. Emerson, 'can scarcely be conceived, than that which has actually occurred at Ephesus. Once the seat of active commerce, the very sea has shrunk from its solitary shores; its streets, once populous with the devotees of Diana, are now ploughed over by the Ottoman serf, or browsed by the sheep of the peasant. It was early the stronghold of Christianity, and stands at the head of the Apostolic Churches of Asia. It seems that there, as St. Paul says, 'the word of God grew mightily and prevailed.' Not a single Christian now dwells within it; its mouldering arches and dilapidated walls merely

whisper the tale of its glory ; and it requires the acumen of the geographer, and the active scrutiny of the exploring traveller, to form a probable conjecture as to the actual site of the first wonder of the world.

“The same writer continues to observe : ‘The present state of Ephesus affords a striking illustration of the accomplishment of prophecy. Ephesus is the first of the Apocalyptic Churches addressed by the Evangelist in the name of Jesus Christ ; his charge against her is a declension in religious fervour (Rev. ii. 4), and his threat in consequence (Rev. ii. 5), a total extinction of her ecclesiastical brightness. After a protracted struggle with the sword of Rome and the sophisms of the Gnostics, Ephesus at last gave way.

“The incipient indifference censured by the warning voice of the Prophet increased to a total forgetfulness, till at length the threatenings of the Apocalypse were fulfilled, and Ephesus sunk with the general overthrow of the Greek empire in the fourteenth century.

“The plough has passed over the city ; and when visited, in March 1826, by the Rev. Messrs. Hartley and Arundell, green corn was growing in all directions amidst the forsaken ruins ; and one solitary individual only was found who bore the name of Christ, instead of its once flourishing Church. Where once assembled thousands exclaimed, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians !” now the eagle yells, and the jackal moans. The soil of the plain on which the ruins of Ephesus lie appears rich : in the summer of 1835, when visited by Mr. Addison, it was covered with a rank burnt-up vegetation. ‘This place,’ he states, ‘is a dreary uncultivated spot ; a few corn-fields were scattered along the site of the ancient city, which is marked by some large masses of the shapeless ruins and stone walls.’ ”

What does all this teach us ? That the Gospel in the midst of a city is the strength, the glory, and the stability of it. The moment that her love left the Church of Ephesus, her ships left her harbours, her soldiers deserted her standard, her ancient and illustrious buildings crumbled into ruins, and Ephesus alone, therefore, is a standing evidence that it is the church of God, in

Old England's heart, that is the secret of the splendour of the diadem that is around the Queen of England's brow. It is Christianity among the people that is the grand secret of all our prosperity and greatness. It is not protectionism, it is not free trade, that is the substance of our commerce, the glory and the secret of our agricultural prosperity;—it is the Gospel alone; and he who becomes a Christian himself and seeks to spread what he feels among those that are around him, does more to advance our country in its loyalty, in its integrity, in its strength, in its riches, in its commerce, in its manufactures, in its agriculture, than all the eloquent speeches made the one way or the other within the walls of parliament. It is by righteousness that a nation stands; it is by sin that it descends to its tomb. I have confidence in the Gospel, and confidence in that alone; and I believe, that when the hurricane swept over Europe, and kings were bowed before it as the grass before the breeze—when the earthquake heaved, and convulsed great empires, and shattered strong and ancient thrones, it was not the guns that were concealed behind the walls of our great public buildings, nor those bayonets that bristled in the sun, nor those noble bands that crowded our streets and were ready when specially summoned specially to act, that saved us; but it was that our people had within them, as a body, indirectly and directly, that love to God which is the secret of true and lasting loyalty. As Ephesus lost her commerce when she lost her Christianity, so London will lose hers if ever she lose living religion in the midst of her. There is already too little Christianity, and too much room for more; instead of Christian churches quartering with each other, and Christian ministers setting themselves in opposition to each other, all ought to labour as one. We want double the number of churches and chapels of every description; and I wish we could bring into them, not visitors from other communions and chapels, but men who are heathens and know not what Christ and his Gospel are. Let us feel that churches will stand in the present day, not by the excellence of their ecclesiastical polity, nor by the patronage of the state, nor by the endowment of the queen, nor by the votes of the people; but by their allegiance to Christ, by their adherence to duty, by their sufferings for truth. Our churches are secured, not by the

splendour of their liturgies, nor by the eloquence of their preachers, or the multitude, or the grandeur, or the nobility of those that visit them; but only by their faithfulness to God, their sacrifices for his cause, their sympathies with his people. Men may talk about the succession, but I feel that this will be found the frailest reed in the universe when the ordeal comes; for the time draws near when men will see that that is the best Church and the most apostolic Church that has the most apostolic charity — that that is the best minister who preaches divine sermons and lives a divine life — and that is the best congregation which does most for the spread of the Gospel which it has first tasted in all its sweetness and realized in all its power.

LECTURE X.

TRIALS.

“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.”—REV. ii. 8, 9.

THE great Head and Bishop of the Churches here introduces himself in a character, and clothed with attributes, suited to the condition of the Church to which he directs the Epistle. In his address to the Church at Ephesus, he introduces himself as “he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;” and it will be found that this preface to the Epistle is in harmony with the statements contained in the body of it. In this, the Epistle to the Church of Smyrna, or rather to the angel, the bishop, or archbishop, or presbyter—the presiding minister or officer of that Church, and through him to the whole body of the faithful constituting that congregation or Church, the great Author introduces himself as “the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive again.” No one can fail to see that there is an obvious contradiction, if looked at in the light of human reason, in such an assumption as “the first and the last.” It strikes you at once that no one can be the first and yet be the last; if he be the one, you argue, he cannot be the other. This is perfectly true of man, because all that can be predicated of man comes within the range of sense or the realm of understanding; but when we come to speak of God, it will be found that what are contradictions when applied to the creature, are great and glorious harmonies when heard respecting Him who filleth all in all with the majesty of his glory.

This reminds me of an objection frequently urged against the doctrines of the Gospel, by persons of a sceptic or infidel turn of mind. They say, "We cannot believe the doctrine of the Trinity, because," they allege, "we cannot comprehend it." No doubt, you cannot comprehend it. Your inference from these premises would be logical were that inference from things within the cognisance of our senses; but it is an inference from premises beyond the cognisance of our senses, and therefore as rash as it is irreverent and wrong. You say, you will not believe what you cannot comprehend. Are you aware that you cannot look above, beneath, around, within, without stumbling upon a thousand things that you cannot comprehend? For instance, you believe that there is such a being as a God; you will not accept the Christian's God; but still no man is such a fool, such an arrant fool, as to pretend to believe that there is no God. Any creed is possible; no creed is impossible. You admit, then, there is a God; you must feel that if there be a God, he is omnipresent, eternal, omniscient. Now, you say the doctrine of the trinity is incomprehensible, therefore you reject it; will you allow me to follow up your reasoning with reasoning perfectly parallel? The doctrine of omnipresence, the doctrine of eternity, is just as incomprehensible as the doctrine of the trinity, and therefore you are bound to deny that there is such a being as an omnipresent or eternal God.

Let me ask you, if I address any such, How much do you comprehend of eternity? You can understand quite clearly a being that lives a thousand years, ten thousand years, or a being that lives ten thousand times ten thousand years; but what do you comprehend of this, that when millennia have rolled on millennia, and cycles have accumulated on cycles, that being is no nearer the end and no farther from the beginning, than when you first began to think about the subject? You cannot comprehend one atom of eternity.

Again, what do you comprehend of omnipresence? You can understand that a person is here—you can comprehend the idea of a person who is there; but what comprehension have you of a Being who is here, and there, and everywhere?—whose shining footprints are the planets—whose circumference is nowhere—

whose centre is everywhere? what do you comprehend of him? Nothing. Then, if you allege, that because you cannot comprehend trinity in unity—because you cannot comprehend how Christ can be the First and yet be the Last, be Alpha and yet be Omega, be God and yet be man, be impassible and yet a sufferer, be immortal and yet die, be the prince of life and yet the victim of death, be the sovereign of the universe and yet be the tenant of a grave,—if you cannot comprehend all this by your own admission, do not argue, that because you cannot comprehend the attributes of Deity as these are revealed in the Bible, that therefore you will not believe in them, or in Him whose they are. If men will not believe what they cannot comprehend, they will have to believe only what they taste, and see, and touch, and smell, and nothing more; they will have to live merely as animals—they will cease to believe that they are spiritual in their life, and immortal in their destiny.

But revelation is first proved to be from God, and then what revelation clearly asserts, it becomes the creature implicitly to accept; and then whether we can comprehend trinity in unity, or not,—whether we can comprehend how Christ can be the first and yet be the last at the same time, or not, God has spoken—all objections must instantly come to an end. Our Lord, therefore, introduces himself here as the first. He that saw the stars shoot into their spheres, suns bud and begin their burning course—he that saw the universe in its cradle, and will see its funeral—he who was the first before all—he who is the last behind all—condescends thus to write to a Church, and to say to her, “I know thy tribulation and thy poverty, and also thy wealth.” In one word, Christ here introduces himself as the everlasting one. The ephemeral insect of a day, and the Alps that have stood upon their foundations from the creation of the world—the stars that looked upon Adam and Eve in paradise, and upon thrones and dynasties that were erected yesterday—are all equally short-lived, when compared with Him who is the First and the Last, who was dead and is alive. He is both God and man: man to suffer, because suffering was our doom; God to satisfy, because without such satisfaction there could be no salvation. It is here stated, “He was dead:” “without shedding of

blood there is no remission of sins." He died that we might live. What a truth! The Lord of glory, the Living One, came down from that throne around which angel and archangel soar, and sing, and worship perpetually; and without any reason but my ruin—without any object except the salvation of disloyal, rebellious, guilty criminals, he followed us to our grave, clasped us to his bosom, and will not leave us till the meanest inhabitant of earth is made the magnificent heir of a crown of glory. Oh, the height and depth, the breadth and length, of the love of God in Christ Jesus! But he died; and if he had not died, we should have never lived. But he also lived, and is alive for evermore; if he had not lived, our death had never ceased. He was dead, and is alive. Christ's death rendered our salvation possible—Christ's life makes that salvation actual. He applies from his throne what he purchased on his cross. If Christ had never died, our sin had never been forgiven; if Christ had not risen, his purchase had never been applied. Easter Sunday is as precious as Good Friday. His resurrection from the tomb is as vital and essential an article in a Christian's creed as his agony and bloody sweat, and his agonizing cry in his last moments, "It is finished," when he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. We have in Christ a complete Saviour—a living Saviour, who was dead, and is alive, and liveth for evermore to make intercession for us.

Such is the preface to this Epistle. Let us next examine the body of this Epistle. It is an autograph of Christ; it is an epistle that he himself hath sealed and sent to a portion of the Church universal. He says, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not."

"I know thy tribulation." The world knows it not. The world has no experience of or sympathy with a Christian's tribulation; the world cannot comprehend it; it cannot appreciate or understand the inward consolation he experiences under it. A Christian suffering is a mystery to the world, and a Christian rejoicing is no less so. A Christian grieves at what the world cares nothing for, and rejoices at what the world can see no happiness in. The world knoweth us not, as it knew him not: but

Christ says, "I know thy tribulation:" and how does he know it? Not as a spy, nor as an inquisitor, but as one who bows from the heavens to express and to make real and felt in our hearts his sympathy and fellow-suffering with us. "I know thy tribulation." But how does he know it? He knows it inasmuch as he permits or directly sends our tribulation. Do you ever think of this, that there is no tribulation that can come to a Christian, let it be a headache or a heartache—let it be fever, consumption, and decay—let it be the departure of a babe or the death of a parent—let it be the loss of property or the desertion of friends—no tribulation can touch a Christian, that Christ sends not for high, holy, wise, and beneficent purposes. Now what a bright view of tribulation does this give to a Christian? That tribulation which comes like the hurricane, or falls upon you like the crushing weight of the avalanche, has been in the bosom of Christ, and has been inspired by the love, and is commissioned by the hand of Christ, before it touches you. There is no chance in this world. All things, good and bad, prosperous and adverse, have their commission or their permission, at all events their control, direction, and overruling issue, in Him who is the First and the Last, who was dead for our sins, and alive again for our justification. But he not only knows our tribulation, but he knows also the necessity of it. Is any Christian afflicted? There is what the Apostle beautifully calls "a needs be." Whatever be the affliction—its nature, weight, bitterness, poignancy—and each man knows his own heart's bitterness most thoroughly—it would not be there if it was not just as necessary for thee, my brother, as that Christ should die and rise again. Thus, affliction, whatever it be, however poignant, however bitter, however inexplicable it may appear, or however strange it may seem to you, is needful for you; it is just as necessary that that man should lose his property, or that woman should lose her child, or that that home should be stripped and made desolate, for that man or that woman's salvation, as that Christ should come down from a throne of glory and die upon the cross to make atonement for your sins. It is no accident that has interposed to disturb the harmony of the universe. It is a link, and an essential link, in that chain which lifts you from your ruin, and leaves you not till it lays you

amid the splendours of the beatific vision, where there shall be no more sorrow or suffering, but all things become new, and there shall be no more death nor crying nor pain. You do not complain of submitting to a painful surgical operation, if that operation is pronounced by medical skill to be needful. Why then should you murmur or repine when you are visited with sore affliction or tribulation, when that tribulation is necessary, not for the safety of a limb, but for the salvation of a soul; not for temporal ease, but for everlasting joy? On the cup that is bitterest, on the blow that is severest, on the shock that is most appalling, there is written, and the eye of faith can read it through its tears, "it needs be," and if there were no needs be, depend upon it you would never have felt it.

But Christ knows not only the *necessity* of it, but he knows also the *preciousness* of it, and the *value* of it to him who is visited by it. He knows your tribulation not only as it is necessary, but he knows it also in order to comfort you under it. Affliction is to a Christian quite a different thing from what it is to a man of the world: every man in this assembly who is not a child of God, or who has not clear and satisfactory evidence for believing that he is so, must believe that his affliction is penal. But every man who knows he is a child of God, and is indeed so, is satisfied that his affliction, whatever it be, is paternal. The difference is tremendous. Paternal affliction is the chastisement of royal sons whom a Father is preparing for a glorious throne: penal affliction is the visitation of a judge descending upon a criminal driven to his doom,—the first drops of that ocean of wrath into which they shall be plunged, or into which rather they are plunging themselves to suffer and die for ever. A believer's tribulation, therefore, whatever it may be, is chastisement; and that very chastisement which he feels so poignant is eloquent with precious lessons. "If ye were without chastisement, you would not be sons." "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" It is in the sunshine of prosperity that we see least of God; it is in the midst of tribulation, in the darkness of the densest night, that the pillar of fire marches in our van, and brightens the darkness with the presence of Him who was dead and is alive, who is the first and the last, the beginning and the

end. The daylight has one sun, but night has a thousand suns : prosperity has some comforts, when it is the prosperity of a Christian ; but adversity, when it is the adversity of a child of God, has joys and hopes and comforts that shine like the very canopy of the city of God.

Christ not only knows our tribulation to comfort us under it, but he knows also the perils of it—"I know thy tribulation ;" I know its needs be ; I know the comfort that you require under it ; I know also the perils that accompany it. There are perils in adversity, just as there are perils in prosperity. One knows not in which there are most. It is therefore a very beautiful prayer of the wise man, "Give me not poverty, lest I should steal ; give me not riches, lest I should be proud and forget God." Give me neither the trials of the one nor the temptations of the other ; but, if it please thee, "feed me with food convenient for me." When our Lord was tried and tempted, Satan came to him, and showed him the kingdoms of the world and all their glory, and offered to make him lord over all, if he would only fall down and worship him.

It is when we are in prosperity that Satan bids us "worship our own net and burn incense to our own drag." It is when we are in adversity that Satan says to us, "If you will only do a dishonest thing — if you will only try that trick — if you will only have recourse to that equivocal and evasive conduct,—then you will get rich, and increase in goods." That is the trial of adversity. That man, however, who can repel the tempter, and say, "Get thee behind me,"—who can say with the prophet of old, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the God of my salvation,"—he feels that God is with him, and thus it matters little who may be against him.

But Christ knows our tribulation also, expressly in order to *sympathise* with it. I need not tell you that when there is no hope of escape, the only consolation in the midst of imprisonment and trial and affliction is sympathy from one who truly feels for us and feels with us. There is nothing more softening in the

experience of humanity than to have one that will respond in sympathy to us—to have one heart that will reflect our suffering and our sorrow, and enable us to feel that, however intense our agony may be, it is an agony that is not with us alone, but that there is a responsive sympathy in the bosom of others that are near us. Let me speak to the humblest, poorest, meanest tenant of a cellar in this assembly this night, if that poor, humble, afflicted one be a child of God, and tell him there is an electric chain between his heart and the heart of Him that sits upon the throne, the First and the Last; and between that poor afflicted one's heart, and the heart of Him who is the Alpha and Omega, there is a chord which vibrates with a ceaseless and perpetual sympathy, so that "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin,"—one who "in all our affliction," to use the language of the prophet, "was afflicted." There is not a stroke that smites a son which has not its echo in the skies—there is not a sorrow or reproach that falls upon a Christian which has not its rebound beside the throne. There is no such thing as a solitary Christian. Kings may despise him; great men, rich men, celebrated men, may forsake him; but angels encamp about him, God's eye is upon him in the height and in the depth, Christ's heart sympathises with him: he is not alone, for the Saviour says, "I am with thee."

Such then is the practical view to be taken of the Lord's address to the Church of Smyrna, "I know thy tribulation." Tribulation is as necessary for a Church as it is for an individual. Tribulation that contributes to the sanctification of the one, contributes to the progress in holiness of the other. It reveals promises that are otherwise concealed, and makes righteousness spring in the desert, and brings us into contact with Him in whom dwelleth all the fulness of God, and who ever liveth to intercede for and to sympathise with us.

As addressed to the angel of the Church of Smyrna, this language must have been specially consolatory. It has been supposed that Polycarp, who was the immediate friend of John, was at this time the angel, or bishop, or presiding minister of the Church at Smyrna, and that this language was addressed to him

in the first instance, and through him to the Church of which he was the exponent, in order to comfort him in the midst of a tribulation, persecution, and affliction which that Church was called upon to endure. In order to show that it was so, I will read an extract explanatory of the treatment received by Polycarp, who was at that time, as I have said, the minister or bishop of the Church to whom these words of consolation are addressed : —

“Polycarp, on hearing that the persecutors of the Christian name were in pursuit of him, and that escape was all but impossible, said, ‘The will of the Lord be done.’ On being arrested, Irenæus relates that he prayed ardently in the midst of his enemies, and so full was he of the grace of God, that he could not cease speaking for two hours, during which time he made earnest petitions for all whom he had ever known, small and great, noble and vulgar, and of the whole Church of Christ throughout the world. Upon being brought before the tribunal, the proconsul, respecting his dignities (for he was a Bishop of the Church) and his advanced age (for he was more than eighty), and desirous to save him, urged him, saying, ‘Swear, and I will release thee. Reproach Christ.’ Polycarp answered : ‘Eighty and six years have I served him, and he hath never wronged me ; and how can I blaspheme my King who hath saved me ?’ The proconsul, judging his efforts unavailing, sent the herald to proclaim in the midst of the assembly, ‘Polycarp hath professed himself a Christian.’ At that hated name, the multitude, both of Gentiles and Jews, unanimously shouted that he should be burned alive. The business was executed with all possible speed, for the people immediately gathered fuel from the workshops and baths, in which employment the Jews distinguished themselves with their usual malice,” — a remarkable fulfilment of the prophecy in the text, that those who said “they were Jews and were not,” (“all were not Israel who were of Israel,”) should, as “the synagogue of Satan,” take an active part in the persecutions of the Christian Church during this period. “As soon as the fire was prepared, Polycarp stripped off his clothes and loosed his girdle ; but when they were about to fasten him to the stake, he said, ‘Let me remain as I am, for He who giveth me strength to sustain the fire, will enable me also, without your securing me with nails, to re-

main unmoved in the fire.' Upon which they bound him, without nailing him; and he, putting his hands behind him, and being bound as a distinguished ram selected from the great flock, a burnt offering acceptable to God Almighty, said, 'O Father of thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have attained the knowledge of thee,—O God of angels, principalities, and of all creation, and of all the just who live in thy sight,—I bless thee that thou hast counted me worthy of this day and of this hour, to receive my portion in the number of the martyrs in the cup of Christ, for the resurrection to eternal life, both of soul and body; among whom may I be presented before thee this day as a sacrifice well savoured and acceptable, which thou, the faithful and true God, hast prepared, promised beforehand, and fulfilled accordingly. Wherefore, I praise thee for all these things; I bless thee, I glorify thee, by the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son, through whom, with him in the Holy Scriptures, be glory to thee, both now and for ever.'"

"Polycarp was apprehended by Herod, under Philip, the Trallian Pontifex, Statius-Quadratus being Proconsul, but Jesus Christ reigning for ever; to whom be glory, honour, majesty, an eternal throne, from age to age."

I quote this to show you the treatment received by the first minister of the Church of Smyrna, as a specimen of the tribulation which the Church had to pass through in its transit to immortality and glory.

After having given, then, some sketch of the tribulations of the Church of Smyrna, and shown that her cross was no painted toy, but a real crucifixion, and that through that cross she had to pass to her crown, we are informed next of her poverty. "I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty." The poor are perpetually with us; it is an ordinance of God, "the poor shall never cease out of the land." The day will never come when all shall be equal,—when all shall be rich, or all shall be poor. There are inequalities in nature; there must be inequalities in providence. But poverty is no shame: we read of our blessed Lord, that "though rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we through

his poverty might be made rich." Rags are no disgrace; lawn is, in itself, no honour. The poor are not to infer they are forsaken of God because they are poor; the rich are not to suppose they are accepted of God because they are rich; nor are you to conclude that he alone is the liberal man who gives the pounds, and that he has no liberality who gives only the pence. There may be large liberality in the heart, when the hand has no means of expressing it; and there may be apparent liberality in the hand, when there is narrowness and poverty indeed in the heart within. God judges of liberality, not by the gift in the hand, but by the grace in the heart; not by what a man can do, but by what a man is truly willing to do. The mite which is the exponent of a gracious heart, rises like incense to the skies, acceptable through Jesus Christ; the thousand which is the mere exponent of vanity and thirst for *éclât*, is hateful in the sight of God, and unprofitable in the experience of man. While it was said of this Church, she was indeed poor, "but," in another sense, it is added, "thou art rich." In what sense was she rich? In that sense in which the Apostles were "poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing all things." There is a wealth which, in the sight of God, is poverty; and there is a poverty which, in the sight of God, is inestimable riches. Riches that God looks at are such as these,—“the riches of goodness”—“the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”—“the riches of his grace”—“the riches of glory”—“the riches of his inheritance in the saints;” “He is the heir of all things;” “in him all fulness dwells.” These are the riches which, I trust, many a child of God who draws near to a communion-table knows to be his—those riches which outweigh the wealth of a Croesus—the riches which are unsearchable—which the world knows not—which it can neither appreciate nor comprehend. The wealth which the world knows is that which can be expressed in the cash-book, or carried in the pocket; but the wealth that the Christian has—that transcends in beauty, in preciousness, in glory, all the riches of the world—are the riches with which the poorest is unspeakably wealthy, and without which the richest man is poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked indeed—is

“unsearchable riches.” The riches of this world, even when they are greatest, are but clay; they are thorns which prick the head that lies upon a pillow of down; the root of many evils, the cause of innumerable troubles: but the riches which Christ has to bestow, which are freely offered to the poorest by the hand that distributes them, are riches that satisfy the soul—that are accompanied with no thorns, but bear fragrant, beautiful, and amaranthine blossoms, and that end, not in perishable dignity, but in a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

These riches are truly useful at that hour when a man’s heart is faint, when in the agony of his soul he asks the question, “What must I do to be saved?” What can then comfort him? Not all the money that the richest can give him; the only comfort ever will be, as it has ever been found to be, the riches of pardoning mercy and forgiving love. And when we come to lie down on that last pillow on which your head and mine must lie, it will not be the least mitigation of nature’s agony, nor the least brightening of the soul’s hope, that you recollect you have been a rich man or a great man; but this will be joy—this will be peace—this will be substantial comfort—that you have an interest in Him who has unsearchable riches to bestow now, and who has riches beyond tongue to express or heart to conceive to give us, when this frail earthly tabernacle is reduced to its ruins, and this inner soul, this immortal inhabitant, enters into an inheritance that cannot be moved, and a glory that cannot fade away.

Seek, above all, these riches; pray that, if poor in purse, you may be rich in soul; pray that, if you have only a crumb of bread upon your table, you may have a glorious estate in reversion; pray that, if in the estimate of the world you are amongst the poor, in the judgment of Him who is the First and the Last you may be rich, because enriched with the unsearchable riches of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of all men, the most pitiable are those who have full purses and empty hearts—who have all that this world can give them, and know not how to use, and sanctify, and lay it out for the glory of God, and for the good, the present comfort, and the future prosperity of souls. Let me ask you, Are you among the poor in spirit, whether you be rich or poor

on earth? are you among the rich indeed, whether you be poor or rich in the estimate of Cæsar? I trust that many are so,—poor in spirit, but rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom of God.

“ Thus the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.”

LECTURE XI.

CHRISTIAN COURAGE.

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer : behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried ; and ye shall have tribulation ten days."—REV. ii. 10.

I EXPLAINED in a previous lecture the glorious attribute assumed by Jesus as exclusively his own, "I am the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega, which was dead and is alive again, and liveth for evermore." I explained also the omniscience displayed in that allusion, "I know thy works, and I know thy tribulation, and I know thy poverty." The one may be misrepresented by the world, the other may be misapprehended, and the last may be despised ; but I know them, applauding what is pure in the one, what is beautiful in the second, what is holy in the third ; and it is a light matter that man should condemn, if it be the fact that your Lord applauds. He then shows that while this was poverty, physically speaking, it was wealth spiritually and truly. There may be unsearchable riches where there is very great outward poverty. Our Lord says so. One church boasted she was rich ; He told her she was poor. This church was humbled because she was poor ; He shows her that she was unspeakably rich. And he says, "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not." Jew is plainly used in the sense of Christian, as in the following instances : ' He is not a Jew which is one outwardly : ' "All are not Israelites who are of Israel." And this book is constructed, as it were, upon a Judaic stage. The apocalyptic scenery is borrowed from the temple, and the national Jew is introduced as the type and symbol of the true and scriptural Christian. And therefore, when it is said "blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are

not." He means, the reproach cast upon thee by those who pretend to be Christians and who are really not so. They reproach thee for thy poverty; they speak of thee as if thou wert not a Christian; "but if you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you, for the Spirit of God resteth upon you." This is a very precious consolation to every Christian, that the spot selected by the Holy Spirit of God specially to rest on, is the head of a reproached and misrepresented believer: "The Spirit of Christ and of glory resteth upon you." We are here again reminded of that lesson I have endeavoured to teach from the beginning, that the visible Church is a mixed Church: of the ten virgins, five were foolish; of the seed cast into the ground, there were tares grew up as well as wheat; among the fishes in the net there were bad as well as good ones: and if you join no church until you have found a pure one, you will live in sin against God, and you will die without communion with the visible Church at all. There was a Judas among the twelve Apostles; and there never has been an era in the visible Church of Christ in which much of it has not been corrupt: half of it is the smallest proportion, and the fear is that the majority have too frequently been so. Christ's flock is still a little flock; and the multitude that follow Antichrist is still a great multitude. The Antichrist is enthroned upon many waters — tongues, and kindreds, and people.

Let us, my dear friends, select the Church we believe to be the best, when selection, in the providence of God, is placed in our power; but if we are in the midst of a communion not radically corrupt nor essentially off the foundation, let us labour rather to purify, exalt, and reform it, than to destroy and reduce it to ruins. You cannot be too much of a reformer; you cannot be too little of a revolutionist. Let us keep the machinery that we have, if it be not altogether unscriptural; and if holy men work bad machinery, it will accomplish brilliant results; but if bad men work the noblest machinery, it will produce no blessing to the world or to the Church at large. The characteristic of a bad tradesman is that he is constantly blaming his tools. I believe that if we thought more of individual holy life to make churches holy, and less of corporate laws and mechanical distinctions, we

should make greater progress in purity and in conformity to the image of God. Let us be satisfied that the fault is not in the flute, but in the player; not in the bow, but in the finger that touches it; not in the instrument, but in the hand that strikes it; not in the machinery, but in the power that is thrown into the midst of it.

I proceed now to unfold Christ's beautiful prescription, which constitutes the substance of my address this evening, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." It is taken at once for granted that suffering was before that Church; and it is before us. It is well that our eyes are blinded to the scenes of our future experience, lest, gazing upon the awful events that may emerge in the providence of God, we should cease to toil, and become paralysed by fear and alarm. But, whatever be the scenes of the future, as these shall appear upon the world's stage, this we know, that in the case of that home that is now brightest, and of that heart that is now happiest, there are days coming that will try the one and shadow the other. For the great law of the Christian dispensation is, "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" but the great comfort of the Christian is, "but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." The path that leads to glory is a path not strewn with roses, but planted with many a thorn; "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God:" and therefore, instead of affliction being the evidence that God hates you, it is the strongest earthly evidence that God loves you. The man that I pity, is not the man who pines with sickness, or "feels the pang of pinching poverty;" nor the man who has lost the loved and the near and the dear; nor the man who has had the accumulation of years of industry swept away by the hurricane which was as unexpected as he thinks it was undeserved: such an one is in the midst of that chastisement which even in its sorest agony points to the fountain from which it springs: "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" But if there be any whose past has always been irradiated with sunshine, whose present is lighted with brilliant temporal hopes, in whose home sick-beds and tears and losses are exiles and strangers, I pity that man, I pray for him; I would say to him, "Pray for thyself; the token that God is

thine, and that thou art his, is not yet upon thee ; for if thou art a son, ' what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not ? and if ye be without chastisement, then are ye bastards, and not sons.' ” Paul says too, in another place, illustrating the same truth, that no man should be moved by his afflictions, for all are appointed thereto. The path that leads to the crown is now, as it was eighteen centuries ago, alongside of the cross. There shall be no baptismal flood of glory, of blessedness and peace, unless first we have tasted of the cup of tribulation and sorrow and distress ; but whatever be your tribulation now, or whatever tribulation you and I may anticipate in years to come (and we know not what lies before us in the year that now rolls onward to its close), let us remember that we may *feel* it, that we may *weep* over it, that we may *battle* with it, but we may not *fear* it. “ Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.” Carry with thee, then, believer, this blessed prescription inscribed upon a leaf from the tree of life, put into thy hand by the great Physician of souls, “ Fear none of those things,” — the worst of them—the heaviest of them—the most painful and bitter of them : — “ fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer ” in the remainder of thy life or in the course of the providence of God.

How beautiful, too, is this prescription ! Christ does not say, “ Be Stoicks, and do not feel them ; ” nor does he say, “ Be Epicureans, and plunge into despair when they overwhelm you ; ” but he says, “ Be Christians ; feel, but do not fear them.” The tenderest hearts often feel most keenly ; the bravest hearts often beat with the intensest sympathy. Not to weep would be not to be human ; to weep till we despair, would be to cease to be Christians ; but to “ weep as though we wept not, to rejoice as though we rejoiced not, and to use the world as not abusing it ” — this is the character of a believer—this is the experience of a child of God. “ Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.”

But, perhaps, you ask, and you ask naturally, What things are these ? I will give you a catalogue of them—a catalogue which has been composed by infinite wisdom, and each pang of which has passed through the heart of one who was acquainted with suffering, like his blessed Master, and now reigns with that

Master before the throne of God and of the Lamb. Paul says, in Rom. viii., "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" and then he gives us the list of those things which we are not to fear. "Shall tribulation," that is one; "or distress," the second; "or," thirdly, "persecution;" "or," fourthly, "famine;" "or," fifthly, "nakedness;" or," sixthly, "peril;" or," seventhly, "sword?"—then in ver. 38, or "death," or "life," or "angels and principalities," or "powers," or "things present," or "things to come," or "height," or "depth," or "any other creature?" "Fear none of those things which any of you may be called upon to suffer." Each of these things is a dark cloud with a blessing in its bosom, and if we are the people of God, (for it is only to the people of God that this prescription is addressed,) we are called upon to feel them—for humanity must feel them—but not to fear them, for Christianity teaches us to triumph over them. Let me call your attention to the first of the list. "Fear not one of those things which thou shalt suffer." The first is tribulation. The word tribulation is the translation of the Greek *θλίψις*, which strictly means pressure; it is applied to the winepress, and denotes that the Christian is placed under strong and overwhelming pressure of danger, or affliction, which, while it brings rebellion from the world, draws confidence and praise from the child of God. The worldling, when crushed, either blasphemes the idol which it recognises as the author of the affliction, or it despairs and commits suicide, and rushes unsummoned and unready into the presence of its Maker. But the child of God, when the pressure is heaviest upon him, is like the aromatic plant of which we read, the severer the pressure, the more fragrance it emits. The greater glory is given to his God the greater the pressure to which the Christian is subjected. To the one it is the savour of death, to the other it is the savour of life. If it be so, believer, fear not tribulation, one of those things which thou shalt suffer. Another mentioned by the Apostle is "distress," which is the translation of the Greek word *στενοχωρία*, which means literally "straitness of place," and is used of a person placed in a corner, as we say, "in such narrow, pinched, and straitened circumstances, that he can see no way of getting out on the right hand or on the left." We have a specimen of this *στενοχωρία* in the

case of the children of Israel, when Pharaoh with all his chivalry was behind them, and the Red sea with its unsounded depths was before them : they were then in a corner, they were then in distress ; if they looked behind, they saw only the sword of the pursuer ; if they looked before, a watery grave. Then what were they to do ? Did Moses say, " Now fear ? " No. Did he say, " Cease to feel ? " No. What then did he say ? What I would say to you and to every believer who is placed in similar circumstances : " Stand still, and see the salvation of God." " Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Just when your trial has reached its very maximum, and the door of escape seems closed for ever, you will find an unexpected opportunity that will not only suffer you peacefully to escape, but that will contribute to the praise, the honour, and the glory of God. Thus, then, if you are placed in distress, the second in this catalogue, you learn the weakness of man, but also the omnipotence of God ; human power is laid aside and you begin to lean only on Him who alone is your strength, and in whom alone is all your deliverance.

The next trouble which you may suffer as a believer is famine. This is one of God's three great scourges, " pestilence, and famine, and war." We have tasted lightly of the pestilence ; it breathed on us as it swept past, and we were scarcely scathed. We have experienced little of the famine, for it appeared in the midst of us, and no sooner appeared in judgment, than it disappeared in mercy ; though strange it is that Ireland, which has so long been the drag upon the expanding energies of Britain, should be visited alike by pestilence and famine, after the outbreak of a civil war had but just been silenced in the midst of it. I cannot, my dear friends, forbear, while looking round at all the states of the world, and the desolations which have been wrought in the midst of them, wondering at the immunity which has been vouchsafed to the city in which we live, and to the land of which that city is the capital. If ever there was a people whose hearts should beat with responsive gratitude to God, and whose evening songs should be hymns of praise and adoring love, and who should feel that the mightiest sacrifices placed upon the altar, or cast into the treasury, are inadequate expressions of a nation's thankfulness and a nation's love, it is the people of this great and highly

favoured land. God forbid that we should ever forget the blessings we have tasted, or, like a country across the water, attribute our deliverance to them that cannot deliver. Once, when travelling in Flanders, I read upon the walls of the Hôtel de Ville, Brussels, this inscription :—"A bello, et fame, et peste, bona Maria, libera nos :—" "From war, and pestilence, and famine, *good Mary*, deliver us." To attribute such deliverance to a creature, is to try to steal a ray from the glory of Christ; and the necessary consequence is, that they who do so receive a curse into their own bosoms.

If we have been delivered from war, from famine, and from pestilence, let us know that it is the heavens that have rained bread—it is the rocks touched by the Divine finger that have brought forth water. It was the raven sent by God that carried bread to Elijah—it was the presence and the blessing of God that made the widow's cruse of oil and barrel of meal continue while the famine lasted; and all the experience of the past, and all the enjoyment of the present, teach us this blessed lesson—"Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Fear not, then, famine. The deliverance of the past is the augury of deliverance in the future. He that hath saved us in six troubles, in seven will not forsake us; for he has loved us, not because we were more numerous than any nation, or greater, or holier, but he has loved us in his sovereignty, and he will love us in his sovereignty still.

The next evil suffered by the Church in the past, and that may be suffered by us, is "persecution." Persecution is rarely wielded now in its literal and strictly material sense. Wherever it was wielded of old, whether in the shape of the fagot, or of the inquisition, or any other form, it only, in the language of the poet, "chased the martyrs up to heaven;" and never were such sweet moments passed by Christians, as those which were spent beneath the power of the oppressor and the persecutor. Jacob flies an exile from his home, and the whole desert becomes luminous with visions of the celestial glory; John is driven to Patmos for his piety, and there passes before him a spectacle of glory so bright that it dazzles the eye of the beholder, and so brilliant that its rays of beauty and of glory are not spent or

faded still. There is no dungeon so dark, there is no cell so deep, there is no prison wall so thick, that the Christian has not there felt the presence, and tasted the grace, and the joy, and the peace of his God. "Fear not," therefore, "tribulation," "fear not distress," "fear not famine," "fear not persecution," nor any of those things which thou shalt suffer. To fear them is to magnify their weight a hundred-fold; to meet them in the strength, and sustained by the promises of your God, is to be more than conqueror, through him that loved you.

Nor fear, in the next place, "nakedness." The martyrs of old were stripped of all their raiment, and exposed by turns to the frost and to the flame, as the whim or caprice of the persecutor was pleased to prescribe. But this they were not to fear. There is no shame in rags, there is only shame in sin; and one wonders that the man who is not ashamed of his sins, should glory in his raiment or his splendid apparel. What is the most precious fur? The clothing of a wild beast! What is the most beautiful plume? The feather of the ostrich of the desert. What is the finest silk? The production of a worm. What is the most valuable pearl? The contents of an oyster's shell. And what is gold dug from the bowels of the earth, about which men fight and quarrel with each other? what is it but a little yellow dust? Yet many are so proud of these things, that it looks as if they had nothing else to be proud of. They are like the cinnamon-tree, the excellence of which is not in the inner wood, for it is worthless, but only in the bark or covering, which is of value. But pride may be greater in a beggar's heart than it is in a prince's. We know that a man may express his pride by wearing rags, just as he may express it by wearing fine linen and sumptuous apparel every day. The false prophets of old wore rough garments, and the monks walked barefoot; and yet both are proud in the sight of God. It is not the rags or the purple that constitute the shame, or the honour, or pride; man is as his heart is in the sight of God. There is often great pride under a beggar's wallet; there is often glorious humility beneath a prince's purple. Let us see that our hearts are right in the sight of God, and then we shall not glory in our fine things, nor be ashamed of our mean things; we shall estimate each other, not by what we *wear*, but by what we *are*.

Nor are we to fear, in the next place, "peril." What are the perils which we are not to fear? The Apostle gives us a list of them, when he tells us, in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, "Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren." Such are the perils which may await you. Life is, to the believer, a continuous struggle. He hears at every turning, "Watch;" he is called upon at every moment to "pray;" he is called upon in every conflict to "take the whole armour of God;" and thus watching, thus praying, and thus armed, we say, fear not any of those perils which thou shalt suffer.

The next that is mentioned is "death;" the most awful, the most painful, the most deprecated of all. What havoc does death leave behind him! I believe that death is a most unnatural thing. It is not natural, that same death; it is nature's curse, calamity, and close. Man was never made to die; he was constituted immortal; and it is only the corroding curse of sin, that cleaves to every sinew, and artery, and vein, and pulse, that brings this fair and exquisite framework, so fearfully and wonderfully made, to be the prey of worms and the companion of the dust. Death takes the friend from his friend, the *protégée* from his protector, the child from his parent, the possessor from his estate, the soul from the body; but there, in the case of a saint, it must stop—it cannot take a believer's soul from a believer's God. When a Christian dies, it is not he that dies, but death that dies in his death-bed; and that groan which seems the physical evidence of a departed spirit, is, in the case of a believer, but the first sound of the marriage-bell which intimates the marriage festival of the Lamb, and his union and communion with God, and with the general assembly of the saints above.

It is thus, then, that you have nothing to fear in death. There is not a grave that is dug deep in the cold-clay churchyard over which a Christian cannot say, "*My Lord first lay there.*" "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." If this separation of friend

from friend, and relative from relative, is only separating them from a communion characterised by a thousand intermingling infirmities, and introducing them into endless, sorrowless, bright, and happy day, where friend shall rejoice again in friend, and child in parent, and parent in child; then we can bear the momentary severance of the passage, for the sake of the glorious interview, the blessed meeting upon that sunlit shore that lies beyond it. We are not to sorrow as those that have no hope; "for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him."

But there is something that we have more reason to fear, if we have reason to fear anything. Death is a solemn thing, but life is a more solemn thing still; and the Apostle, therefore, in this catalogue mentions not only death, but life. When I think of the conflicts and struggles in this great city, for instance, where the competition and conflict of business is so great — when I think of that surging ocean which rolls and rises, and ebbs and flows, through every thoroughfare — when I think of the thousands struggling on, despairing of a shore, and feeling not a bottom, and little knowing what may be the issue — I feel that if death be ever painful in a Christian's prospect, life is ten times more terrible in a Christian's experience. You know how hard it is to deal with the world and keep your integrity inviolate. Many know how difficult it is to transact the business of life, and yet to do it as in the sight of him of whom you say, "Thou God seest me." Many a bosom in this assembly is convulsed with conflict, and with struggle, how he shall do what his conscience bids him do at the word of God, and how he shall do what the claims of his family seem to prescribe for their provision. Let us pray that we may cleave to the prescriptions of conscience, and that grace may be given you to enable you to do so. You will ever find, that if you lose a good bargain, because you love a better Lord, he who has told you that "man doth not live by bread alone," will make "Christ and a crust," as a poor woman once said, sweeter and more delightful than the sacrifice of conscience, with its tortures, and agony, and sorrow, in connexion with the luxuries and splendours of the world. Depend upon it, there is truth in this maxim, "Seek first" — in the

school, in the counting-house, in the shop, in the corn-market, in the Royal Exchange, in the House of Commons, in the House of Lords — “the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things will be added,” thrown in as make-weights, which God will give to all who truly serve him.

The Apostle proceeds to enumerate, among other things, “things present.” Every one knows where the barbed arrow rankles, and the cup that is bitterest; and every one believes his own burden to be the heaviest. But, whatever be the present load, whatever be the poignancy of the present trial, remember that He who delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and sustained them amid the burning flame, will not forsake you; and that He in whose strength the martyrs triumphed at the stake, and were wafted in a chariot of flame to a crown of glory, is the same God, whose strength is still made perfect in weakness, and whose grace is still sufficient for you.

Nor, says the Apostle, should we fear “things to come.” What they may be—whether the years that come shall come dancing in sunshine, like bridesmaids to a bridal, or whether they shall approach clothed with sackcloth and covered with crape, as mourners to a funeral—God only knows. Whether the coming year shall be sunshine or sadness—whether hearts that are now bounding shall be breaking—or whether hearts that now break shall be bound up, and find gladness for sorrow, “the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness”—God only knows. But come what may from the future, or be felt what may from the present, fear ye not; the God who has fed you all your life long is your God still; he has been with you in six troubles, and in seven he will not forsake you: “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer,” is his own blessed prescription.

To sum up all,—Fear not the height of prosperity, nor the depth of adversity; fear not the height of honour, nor the depth of shame; fear not the pinnacle of the temple to which the devil may lift you, nor the crypt below the temple in which the tyrant may place you. Fear nothing above, nothing below, nothing around, for the whole universe is at friendship with that man

who is at friendship with the living God, and can call Him "my Father."

Let me ask you, then, in concluding this summary, What is there for you to fear? Tribulation? "Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven." Hunger? He feeds us with living bread. Nakedness? He clothes us with spotless righteousness. Death? To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Banishment? The whole earth is the Lord's, and there is no spot to which the persecutor can drive you where the wing of your Father shall not be stretched over you. Whom, then have we to fear? We are predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son; we are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Our victory is the subject of everlasting decree, for we are "chosen unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth;" and, says the Apostle, "our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory;" and, he adds, "though no tribulation for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." And the Apostle tells us what things the saints of old had to endure, and what things they overcame; none of these therefore may we be afraid of. "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

But let me endeavour to show you some reasons why you should not fear those things with which you have to contend. First, because you are never alone. Realize this true thought—a believer is never alone. Wherever there is a heart that beats with Divine responsive love, there there is a Saviour to feed that love, and guide the beating of that heart. In the closet, where you

pray in secret—at the family altar, where you act as the priest of the household—in the sanctuary, where you are one of a thousand worshippers—in the deep coal-mine, or on the lofty Apennine peak—in the tents of Mesekh and the tabernacles of Kedar—on the ocean's bosom—in the field of battle—in the cloister, and in the court—Christ is with you always, even unto the end of the world. Therefore, “fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.”

In the next place, in the midst of your sufferings Christ is at hand to help you. I will read you a beautiful and touching instance of this in Mark vi. 45 : “And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: for they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.”

Here you have a perfect picture of Christ and his Church; the Church is on the bosom of the tempestuous deep, toiling and rowing the first, second, and third watches, three parts of the night, and no help comes. But what was Christ doing all the while his people were thus distressed? He was interceding for them upon the mountain's side, where He held sweet and blessed communion with his Father and their Father, with his God and their God. And at the fourth watch, just when despair began to creep over their spirits and to paralyse their energies, He came, waving his hand over the ocean's bosom, whose waves played like babes around his holy feet, and proclaiming to his disconsolate and dejected ones, “It is I; be not afraid.” He will never cease to intercede for them whom He has washed in his own blood, and whom He is preparing to be gems, that shall

sparkle the more beautifully when they have passed through the fire, in his own glorious diadem.

To comfort the believer still more, and to lead him not to fear, let him recollect, that the love of Christ originates and directs all. Now, here is just the difference between a Christian man's suffering and an unconverted man's suffering. The unconverted man's suffering is penal; the Christian's suffering is paternal. In the case of a child of God, Christ exhausted from every suffering the last element of wrath, and substituted for it the element of love. The blow that smites the Christian most severely, is inflicted by that hand which was nailed to the accursed tree; the cup that a Christian has to drink, even when that cup is bitterest, is filled with love in disguise, and not with wrath in the least possible degree. Whatever your affliction may be—be it the loss of thy property, or the loss of thy children, or the loss of the nearest and the dearest that thou hast, not one blow reaches thee, my Christian brother, which has not been meted out by the wisdom and the love of Him who has taught us to kneel and say to Him, "Our Father who art in heaven." Glorious truth! Let me then go forth with this blessed assurance, that if there light upon my head all the storms of the four points of the compass together, they are all expressions of paternal love. There is no really cross wind in a Christian's voyage to glory; whether it blow against him, or blow forward, or blow from either side, it equally wafts him to the haven of perpetual rest. Whatever be the severity of the conflict, or the force of the tempest, it can never rend him from Christ, nor induce him to let go Him, whom he has as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast.

Recollect also that all your afflictions are designed to sanctify and fit you for heaven and for happiness. For what says the Apostle? "Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: for tribulation worketh patience"—this is one grace—"and patience, experience," that is another; "and experience" is the parent of another grace—"hope," and then this hope "maketh not ashamed." "All things," says the Apostle, "work together for good;" mark the expressiveness of this assertion. He does not say that "*some* things work together for good" to a Christian, but "*all* things." And he says that "*all* things *work*." Every

thing is in action ; and there is no dispute among them, for all things "work *together*" in perfect harmony ; and all things have a beneficent tendency, for "all things work together *for good* to them that love God and are the called according to his purpose." Therefore I say to every true Church, what Christ said to the Church of Smyrna, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer."

In order still further to enforce this, let me very briefly remind you that the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel of John begins with a prescription exactly parallel to this. Our Lord says, in the first verse, "Let not your heart be troubled:" the Seer in the Apocalypse says, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." It may be useful, when you have leisure, to study this chapter, to go over, *seriatim*, each verse of it ; and you will find that the first verse. "Let not your heart be troubled," is the text : or, in the language of this epistle, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer;" and that each verse in succession is a reason why the Christian's heart should not be troubled. For instance, "Let not your heart be troubled." Why? "In my Father's house are many mansions." Do not think that there is any necessity for your pressing back your friend ; there is plenty of room for all that wish to enter ; not one will be excluded who does not exclude himself. "Let not your heart be troubled, as if you knew not for what I am going: I now tell you that I go to prepare a place for you. Why should you fear because I am absent? my absence is for your good ; I am preparing a place for you, and affliction is one of my servants, which is preparing you for that place. But if you should say, We know not the way ; fear not, I am 'the way.' But if you should say, We cannot know how to walk in that way ; fear not, for I am 'the truth,' and I will guide you. But if you say, We are dead and weak, and unable to do anything ; fear not, for I am 'the life,' and I will strengthen and sustain you in the way. Be not afraid, therefore, for I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." But if you should say, "We have none of those things that we need;" yet "Fear not ; be not afraid, for if ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." But if you should say, "O Lord, we shall have no comfort

in the midst of the conflict, our hearts will be so torn and our feelings so injured by the struggle through which we shall have to pass, that we shall be worn out with the ceaseless agony and conflict and trial;" our Lord says, "Fear not; be not afraid, for I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter." "But, O Lord, we may forget these things." "Fear not; be not afraid, for that Comforter shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance." Whatever may be your sufferings—however you may be persecuted, and reproached, and calumniated, "fear not, for I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

"Fear not." Those who have palms in their hands, and who wear the white robes they have washed and made clean in the blood of the Lamb, were all in the furnace, and have come through the same arduous struggle for Christ: we follow only in the wake of Abel, the first martyr—of Enoch, and Moses, and Abraham, and Isaiah—of Matthew, who was beheaded—of Mark, who was dragged through the streets of Antioch till he died—of Luke, who was hanged on an olive tree—of Peter who was crucified, and of Paul who was murdered in the Mammertine prison at Rome. You follow them who through faith have passed through the same Red Sea, and who now sing a nobler song than the song of Moses, being more than conquerors through Him that loved them and gave Himself for them. Fear not the prison, for no walls can intercept the communion between Christ and his own. "Fear not," says our blessed Saviour, "persecution, for it cannot separate you from me, it will rather bind us the more closely together. Fear not poverty, for I will make you unspeakably rich; fear not death, for I have taken away its sting; fear not eternity, for the Lamb is its light, and I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Fear nothing; pray, watch, persevere through life; but do not fear. To fear, is to lose strength. The joy of the Lord is the Christian's strength; sadness and gloom are the elements of a Christian's weakness. Remember then whom you serve, who watches over you, from whom you may draw, and what treasure you may

draw from Him ; and then, whether you shall be, like the Church of Smyrna, ten days, which, prophetically, is ten years, cast into prison, or whether you shall be subjected to trials and tribulation and distress, and all God's billows and waterspouts seem to pass over you—some few years hence it will matter very little what we have suffered, if we find this, that we have washed our robes in the Lamb's precious blood, and that our righteousness is the righteousness of our Lord. Our hearts shall beat in a better clime, where every beat shall be blessedness, and every pulse a wave from that ocean of joy and felicity which is around the throne of God and of the Lamb for ever.

LECTURE XII.

CHRISTIAN FAITHFULNESS.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—REV. ii. 10.

THIS promise, as I explained on a previous evening, is made to the angel, and through him, to the people of the Church at Smyrna. I explained, in my first discourse upon this Epistle to the Church of Smyrna as a section of the Church Universal, Christ's Omniscience — "I know thy works — thy meanest and thy mightiest; the cup of cold water and the precious sacrifice." "I know," too, "thy tribulation," the path thou hast trodden, the thorns that have stung thee in it, the reproaches that have settled on thee, the conflict and the agony through which thou hast passed. And "I know," too, "thy poverty;" thou art a poor Church; thou hast not much wealth; thy people belong to the humblest, not to the highest class, as does the greater part of the Church of Christ still. It is true, not only of the ministry, but also of the people; not many mighty, not many noble, not many rich are called. What a solemn statement is this, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Strange and terrible evidence of the disastrous eclipse under which all humanity has come, that the very thing which God's word proclaims to be the greatest drag on our career to glory is the very thing for which all hands are stretched out that they may clutch it, and which all hearts are thirsting to possess, and all men thinking the greatest and the chiefest of the gifts which heaven showers down upon mankind. I do not believe that wealth is a real blessing; the true blessing is within, not without; it is not the change of the outward circumstance that

makes a man happy, or that makes the poor man really rich ; it is the change of the inward heart which makes the outward circumstances rich and more than satisfying. Man's great mistake is, that he thinks to heal the patient by changing his bed ; God's great plan is to heal the patient's disease, and then the roughest bed will feel smooth. "I know thy poverty." But then, He adds, "thou art rich : " thou art poor in the estimate of man, thy bank-book has very little to thy credit in it ; thy estate is very easily measured ; thy purse is very light indeed ; and yet, though poor in the estimate of them who call that riches which may be grasped thus, thou art rich in the estimate of Him who counts that only to be riches which are current in heaven and which bear the stamp and the superscription of the Son of God. Even Victoria's coin is but base coin in heaven ; the only coin that is current there is that which is from heaven's mint, and stamped with Christ's superscription—the unsearchable riches of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith, unto all and upon all them that believe. And then, He says, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer."

Last Lord's-day evening I addressed you upon these words. "Thou shalt suffer" is written in prophecy, and will be felt in the experience of every man in this assembly. The man whose past has been sunshine without cloud—whose career has been smoothness without interruption, has reason and strong reason to suspect whether it stands right between him and God or not : for does not the Bible say that chastisement is one of the tokens and badges by which God's children are distinguished ? "What son is he," says the Apostle, "whom the father chasteneth not ? if ye be without chastisement, then are ye bastards, and not sons ;" and therefore, that man who now congratulates himself that he has had a smooth and a happy course, and fine weather and fair wind, his sail stretched out and not drawn in since he started in his career, should indeed begin to look within, and to pray, if he never prayed before, "Search me, O God, and know my heart, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." And, on the other hand, that man who knows what a rough way is, and what many a storm, and many a trial, and many a bereavement is—who counts the years of his pil-

grimage by the tombs he has left behind him—who feels what the roughness of the hill is by the tears and toils he has spent on it,—that man is under the chastisement, if a child of God, of his heavenly Father; and sweet indeed will be the home that follows so rough a journey—bright indeed will be the sunshine after so inauspicious a night; he goes forth sowing in tears, but he shall reap at the great harvest in unutterable joy. “Fear none of those things;” do not be afraid of them, do not misconstrue them; they are the tokens of a Father’s love; they are conducting thee to a Father’s home; and I believe, that if any one in this assembly at this moment is visited with bereavement, with sickness, with loss, it was just as necessary that you, my brother, should thus suffer, in order to be saved, as it was that Christ should come from heaven and die upon the cross. The only ground of your acceptance is that most precious cross; but a link in that chain that lifts you from the thralldom of this world to the glorious liberty of a better is just that affliction you deprecate, or that trial you would rather be rid of. “Fear none of those things;” none of them shall overwhelm you, none of them shall conquer you, for “I am with thee,” says thy Father; “when thou passest through the waters they shall not overflow thee; when thou passest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” And then He gives a charge—a true and a precious charge—not a charge that begins with Protestantism and ends in Popery—not a charge that begins with neither Protestantism nor Popery; but a charge full of truth—a charge that should ring in the heart of every minister,—nay, not in the heart of every minister only, but in the heart of every man who has a post and a commission in the world, “Be faithful unto death;” and then a glorious promise, “and I will give thee a crown of life.” What is meant by faithfulness here? We have it explained in Matt. xxiv. 45, where our Lord says, “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.” We have the very same faithfulness described in Matt. xxv. 21: “Well done, thou good and

faithful servant : thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

You see, then, what faithfulness is. It means, strictly and properly, allegiance, trust, persistence in the path of duty, uncompromising steadfastness and obedience. It may be addressed to the Queen upon the throne—to the prime minister before her—to the peer in the Lords—to the senator in the Commons—to the magistrate on the bench—to the minister in the pulpit—to the hearer in the pew—to all men in all circumstances,—“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

Let me notice in explaining this subject, what are some of the things in which this faithfulness may be expected. From the passages I have quoted, it seems especially to refer to faithfulness to Him who is our great Lord and Lawgiver—the Lord Jesus Christ. Faithfulness is due first to Christ. All obedience must be rendered, not to a dogma, but to a person. Christianity is the contact of a living person with a living Lord, and Saviour, and Lawgiver. This faithfulness, this obedience, I say, must be rendered to Him who is the Lawgiver ; and blessed be his Name ! He who gives us the law, gives us also strength to obey that law. We are, therefore, in the exercise of faithfulness to Christ, to take his righteousness as our only and our exclusive trust—his law as that which only and exclusively, in things spiritual and eternal, has force and authority over us ; and if the command of the mightiest monarch who sways the most powerful of all the sceptres of the world were to come in direct, unequivocal, and unquestionable collision with the command of our great Legislator, Christ, we ought to have but one answer—“Whether it be right to obey God rather than man, judge ye.” His command must supersede all—allegiance to Him must be clung to in spite of all ; we must suffer, and sacrifice, and die, if needs be ; but the Lord must be our Lawgiver, the Lord must be our King. “If any man,” He says, “will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me ;” and “if any man come after me, and hate not father, and mother, and wife, and brethren, and sister, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” Of course you will understand that it does not mean that love to Christ

implies hatred to our dearest and our nearest relatives. Scripture often speaks absolutely, when the context and the very nature of the thing show that it is to be understood relatively. Thus, for instance, we read in one place, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life." If a person were to understand this in its rigid or absolute sense, it would imply that he was to turn monk, not to labour, but to go and be fed at the public expense; and it would plainly contradict a clear unequivocal statement in another Scripture, "If any man will not work, neither should he eat." We therefore infer that the command, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth," &c., means, labour more earnestly, more perseveringly, for the bread of life, than you do labour for the bread that perishes. And so here, "If a man hate not father, and mother, and wife, and sister, and brother, he cannot be my disciple," means, that when the crisis demands it—and it is the last and most terrible crisis that man can possibly contemplate,—but if the crisis clearly and without mistake shows that Christ's command does come into collision with the command of the nearest and the dearest that we know, then we are to turn our back upon father, mother, sister, brother, wife, and children; and we are to say to Christ, and to Him alone, "Where thou goest, I will go; where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

Faithfulness to Christ is the first thing; faithfulness to all under him is the second and the subordinate thing; and our faithfulness to Him must be the faithful affection of a wife towards her husband, of children towards a parent, of subject towards a sovereign. Christ must be throned in our conscience as in his own glorious and blessed realm; all our affections must be a perpetual ministry around Him; all our faculties his servants before Him; his cross must be ours; his reproach must be ours; his will must be ours; his commands must be our rule; and "in keeping his commands," we shall find "there is great reward."⁴

Such is the first department of faithfulness; and I may say also, in a secondary sense—not secondary in importance, but secondary in order—we are to be faithful to truth. Persons do

not always think thus. Peace without truth is deception ; truth without peace and love becomes bitter controversy. The two should always be together ; but if we must sacrifice one, let us sacrifice peace, if needs be, not truth. The reason of it is this, that truth is the root—peace is the beautiful and aromatic blossom that blooms upon it. If you sacrifice the blossom, the root remains ; and as soon as it feels the approach of returning spring, it will give birth to other and more beautiful blossoms ; but if you sacrifice the truth, which is the root, then no spring will restore its dead ashes, or cause it to bud and blossom in years to come. Let us seek first the truth, and next peace in the light and under the influence of truth, and we shall then find the peace that passeth understanding. Let us be faithful in contending for truth—faithful in proclaiming the truth—opposed to all that would subvert, or modify, or undermine, or dishonour the truth—let us be faithful in spreading the truth, recollecting that God has made us saints just that we may be servants—that He has called us to know that He is gracious, that we may be instrumental in bringing others to the knowledge and enjoyment of the same great truth. Part, if you like, with the greatest husk of prejudice, but do not part with the least living seed of vital and scriptural truth. Give up, if you like, the greatest ceremony, if it will conciliate a brother ; but do not give up any one vital truth, if it were to conciliate the whole world. In things that are ceremonial, circumstantial, rubrical and ritual, be yielding as the osier or the willow before the vernal zephyr ; but in things that are vital, scriptural, essential, be firm as the gnarled oak that towers in the storm, and stands fast in the sunshine, immutable, unmoved,—the same in winter's blasts as in summer's suns.

Be faithful to the truth ; “buy the truth,” in the language of Solomon, “and sell it not.” Especially, my dear friends, be faithful to that truth, and stand steadfast for that truth, which is in jeopardy. The mother pays most attention to the child that is suffering ; you yourselves will be most careful of that property which is most exposed to peril ; and, with the wisdom of the world, sustained and sanctioned by the grace of God, we must take care to stand most firmly, and contend most closely, for that

spiritual truth which may be most in danger. Let me state what are some of the truths most in peril at the present day. One is justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ alone. It is called in one quarter a satanic doctrine; it is denounced in another as a Lutheran discovery; it is proclaimed in a third as an Antinomian dogma. Let them brand it as they may; be assured, what can be clearly proved, that whatever be the name by which it is denounced in the nomenclature of man, there is one great name by which it is distinguished in the language of heaven—it is the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation. This blessed truth—this truth which is the most essential truth of Christianity, the article of a standing or a falling Church, without which the Gospel is no good news, and the New Testament but a second edition of the law—that we are justified, not by anything we are, or anything we do, or anything we suffer, or anything we sacrifice, but by this alone, that Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him; and that we, who had nothing in the world but sin, are made righteousness by Him; and that as He bore our sins, and came under our overshadowing and crushing curse, so we shall bear his righteousness, and come under his overshadowing and glorious blessing.

Another truth that is now particularly menaced, and a truth that is always in peril wherever there are corrupt hearts, as there always will be, to deal with truth, is regeneration by the Holy Spirit of God. If it be true, as I have said, that justification by the righteousness of Christ alone is the article of a standing or a falling Church, we may truly say that regeneration by the Holy Spirit alone is the article of a living or a dead Church. The two are inseparable; yet sometimes we do endeavour to separate them. What is regeneration? A change of heart—a change just as great as the creation of a world, and a change that it needs Omnipotence to achieve, just as much as it needs Omnipotence to make a world, or to keep that world from ruin. “Except a man be born of the Spirit of God, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Baptism cannot regenerate; it can wash the outward man; it does not sink deep enough, nor is it penetrating enough, to wash and purify the inward heart. Baptism is, as I have often told

you, admission into the visible Church; — the minister of the Gospel can give you this; — but regeneration is admission into Christ's elect, and justified, and sanctified, and cleansed, and adopted Church — the Lord Jesus alone can give you this! I am quite sure that if men would only keep in mind these two things — a visible Church composed of all the baptized, and a true, spiritual, inner Church, composed of all the regenerate — they would never commit so many errors; we should then see the visible Church corresponding to and keeping in it the true Church, just as we have the nutshell keeping in it the precious kernel; the one adapted to the other, and fitted to preserve it. We have admission into the visible Church by baptism, in order that the baptized may come into contact with the Spirit of God, who can admit into the true Church. And in the same manner we have the Lord's Supper in the visible Church, in order that the believer may be led to come into contact with that living bread and that living water, of which if a man eat and drink, he shall live for ever. These are the two truths that are always in peril; the two anchors, fore and aft, of the ark of the Lord. We must be faithful in the maintenance of these truths; we must let none supersede them; let them lie deep and close in our affections, and rise high in our judgment, and be held fast, as the core, the essence, the substance of our common Christianity.

Another part of this faithfulness is faithfulness to duty. We should be faithful to whatever our duty may be shown to be, not only in the word of God, but also in the providence of God; for God shows us duty in his providence by giving us opportunity and strength for its discharge, just as he points out duty in his word, by laying down prescriptions and rules for us to observe. Duty is always to be held as sacred. The most sacred thing, next to God's word itself, is duty. The Gospel does not discharge us from its obligations; we are not justified freely by a Saviour's righteousness, in order that we may plunge into indolence and disobedience to his law; but we are taken from the curse of that law we have broken, in order to come into contact with that law as a standard by which to try our attainments, a rule of life by which to walk. The duty of obedience to God's word, and con-

formity to God's will, everywhere and at all times, is a sacred thing; and there is sweetness in the knowledge and happiness in the performance of duty—that duty which is always in the present tense—which stands an everlasting and an immutable *now*—of which conscience is the monitor, God's word the directory, and of which God's providence is often the occasion of showing what it is, and where it is, and how we are to enter upon it.

Such faithfulness to Christ, to truth, and to duty, implies opposition. Why the prescription, "Be faithful unto death," if there were no risk, conflict, opposition? Many persons seem to think that Christianity is a soft lawn, and that we have nothing to do but to lie still, and be borne to heaven; and because Romish pilgrimages and macerations of the body have passed away, they think that Protestant mortification of the lusts of the flesh ought to pass away too. But it is not so; the outward superstitious treatment of the body has perished, and ought to perish, and Mosaic fasts and feasts have passed away; but it is requisite still that there should be ⁱⁿ man's heart that kingdom which is not meat nor drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

In pursuing this path of faithfulness to Christ, to truth and duty, we may and shall have to be "faithful unto death." "Fight the good fight of faith," says the Apostle; "lay hold on eternal life." Contend earnestly for truth. And hence a Christian's life is not the alternation of duty and enjoyment, but the constant experience of enjoyment in duty. Christianity is not duty to-day and happiness to-morrow, but it is happiness to-day in the performance of duty to-day; and just in the ratio in which we prepare ourselves, in God's strength, for the discharge of duty, is the amount of happiness that we shall realize.

But this faithfulness has a limit; it is said, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." It may denote, in the first place, Be faithful to the end of life; do not, as some persons do, accept Christianity to-day, and burst forth into the most fervent expressions of enthusiasm, and then to-morrow, or next year, revert into all the apathy which you felt before. Receive the truth with all fervour indeed, but cleave to the truth with all the fixity of a riveted principle. We do not want the

momentary flash of the meteor, that bursts in brilliancy, and then leaves the night darker than before; what we want is the calm and growing sunshine of the rising sun, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. We ask not for the thunder-shower, which comes down in fury, sweeping all before it; but for the ceaseless, silent, penetrating influence of the dew, which makes the earth fertile, and bud, and bring forth. We want that Christian principle and feeling, which mingles itself with every action, and goes down to that which is deepest and truest in human nature, and becomes the enjoyment of all, the support of all, and the consolation and the peace of all. Be faithful to the end of life, ending, as you have begun, by looking unto Him who is the Author and the Finisher of our faith.

But perhaps the meaning is not only, continue faithful to the end of life, but it may mean also, "faithful unto death," by laying down our life, if need be, for Christ's sake. Let us look this in the face. I do not think it is altogether judicious for a minister to say now, "Could you die for Christ's sake?" because when dying times come, a dying spirit is given. When God requires martyrs, he makes them; he fits his people for the exigency when it comes; and therefore, to ask a man now, Could you die for Christ? is to put a too strong question: and yet sometimes we should look it in the face; we should at least be able to say this, "None of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy." We should be ready to lose our life for Christ's sake, in order that he may gain it. The Apostle Paul says to the Christian Hebrews, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood." He speaks of it as a thing that may come, and for which we ought ever to be prepared. We know not what times are before us; we know not what scenes may soon turn up. We see all so fair, so calm, so beautiful, in this favoured land of ours, because the overshadowing pinions of our God are stretched over us. But if we, like other lands, become unfaithful to Christ, to his truth, to duty, and to duty in the shape in which it is needed in the present day—self-sacrifice, generosity, large-hearted liberality,—those overshadowing pinions, which are more impenetrable than all the bulwarks of man, will be folded, and then our land will be rocked by the earthquakes

which are shattering and convulsing every other land, and the thunder-stamp of revolution may be heard at our doors, and blood may stain our streets, as it has stained those of every capital in Europe.

If it be true, as great men and good men think, that the whole world is splitting into two great sections—one consisting of God's people, who are becoming every day more real, more earnest, more intense, more careless about ceremony, more concerned about vital truth—more like Christ, more sympathising with him, more zealous for his cause; and the other half of the world—worldly men, who are becoming daily more visibly and distinctly allied to Satan, and ready to exert their whole strength for him, and to fight for him and die for him; then, when the two hosts have taken their places, and each army has received its specific and peculiar polarity, that tremendous antagonism will begin which will show the black lines of murderers on Satan's side—for he was a murderer from the beginning; and the noble army of saints and martyrs on the other side—for such have Christ's people been in the best and in the worst of times. Such a crisis is coming, and it is my conviction that it will come, and come far sooner than any of us are dreaming of,—for 1849 is only a lull in the midst of the terrible storm that has come upon us. Sailors talk of what they call “breeding weather,” *i. e.* calm weather, when the sail flaps upon the mast, preparatory to a storm: in such weather they make ready to take in every stitch of canvass, every man stands at his post, the ship is made all tight and trim to ride out the approaching hurricane, which in six, eight, or ten hours comes rushing on, convulsing heaven and earth as it sweeps past them. This 1849 is the breeding weather; by and by the storm will come, and come right speedily, and only they whose anchor is in sure ground, whose refuge is the Son of God, whose hearts are, as their hearts should be, under the influence of the Spirit of God, whose only standard is the Bible, whose only pole-star is a Saviour, whose only hope is Deity, these alone will be able to ride out the storm; and when it has ceased, and the earth has undergone its wreck, they will be found in that holy ark, not built by Noah, but built by Christ, which will bear them safe amid the storms, and the fury, and the waves of this present

troubled world, and land them, not upon the barren hills of Ararat, to look forth upon a world dismantled and depopulated, but upon the everlasting hills of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Be faithful, then, even unto death, and at the expense of martyrdom, if needs be, for Christ's sake. In order to be faithful, we must be fully convinced of the truth of God's word. Make up your minds, upon evidence satisfactory to yourselves,—and the best evidence is when one's own heart responds to it,—that God's word is true; and when you have made up your mind that it is so, lay aside that fact in your heart, and leave it there, and when a geologist emerges from the bowels of the earth, or an astronomer descends from his aerial flight, or a traveller comes from the east, or from the west, and says, "I have discovered something which proves that the Bible is false," just tell him, "I have settled it in my mind, upon clear and conclusive evidence, that the Bible is true; and whatever you have discovered, above or below, in the east or in the west, never can disprove it; it will be found that your science is defective, not that God's word is false." Treat the inspiration of scripture as a thing settled; do not always bring the Bible into discussion; give it, once for all, a thorough investigation; weigh every testimony, examine every proof; and when you have come to a full conviction that this book is true, lay aside the fact; do not bring it again into discussion; do not keep always reverting to the very threshold of Christianity; settle it in your minds that it is true; and when you have done so, and concluded, as the highest logic and the holiest heart will conclude, that this book is true, store it up as a settled point, not to be dragged into discussion because any fool comes and tells you that he has discovered something which may upset it. It rests on its own immutable foundation. See this, examine this, lay this clearly before your mind, and then you are prepared for whatever may betide. If a sailor at sea has always a lurking suspicion that his compass is a bad one, and may deceive, he will feel always in jeopardy; but if he commits himself to his compass, and steers by that, conscious that it is right, he will then go on confidently and safely. And so it must be with you; the only way to remain faithful to Christ—faithful even to

martyrdom—is to have a clear, fixed, immutable conviction within you, that God's word is indeed God's word.

Above all, let me exhort you to seek the Holy Spirit to enable you to be faithful. You cannot sink in the rolling billows when the storm bursts forth in its fury, if you lean upon Christ, and believe that he can save you. But this perseverance in leaning—this faithfulness unto death—is “not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts.” You may say it is paradoxical, or contradictory, but it is matter of fact, (and one fact is worth a whole cartload of metaphysical discussion,) that the man that leans most on strength that is above him, does the most, in that strength, in the battle of life that is before him. This is one of the grand paradoxes of Christianity, that just as the man who believes that he is justified by a righteousness without him, is the man who has a heart most inlaid with holiness within him; so that man who leans most upon God's Spirit as all his strength without him, is just the man who labors most and does most in the world around him. Lean upon the Spirit of God, and you will have strength sufficient for anything that may be required of you; lean upon your own strength, and alas! you will indeed find it a broken reed that will fail you when you most need it. The Church walks the straight road through the wilderness itself when she leans upon the arm of her beloved. We must lean; creatureship must lean; faith finds its safety and its strength in leaning.

Let me add, as my last remark upon this faithfulness, that we must be faithful, not merely in great places, but wherever God, in his providence, may place us. Some seem to think, “If I were placed in some lofty post in order to play a brilliant part in the eye of the world, how faithful should I be!” But, my dear friends, if you cannot be faithful in the servant's place, you never will be faithful in the master's. If you cannot be faithful in the by-paths of common life, you never will be faithful in the high-roads of public life. More of real Christianity is seen by God in the nooks and corners and sequestered lanes of this great city, than in its parliament, in its halls, in its palaces, and its great public and prominent places. If we cannot be faithful in the least, we have the highest possible authority that we cannot be

faithful in the greatest. We are not responsible to God for the place we are in, or for the strength we have, or for the success of our efforts; for what does the Lord say to the servant at the close of his career? He does not say, "Well done, thou good and successful servant;" but he says, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." God expects us to be faithful; and if we are faithful, we may leave to Him the success or the issue of that faithfulness. God expects us to be faithful wherever we are, and however we may be situated.

There remains the promise given to us, on which I will shortly dwell, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Without enlarging, let us notice, first, the donor of it—the Lord Jesus Christ; He who is all-powerful says, "I will give thee a crown of life." Next, the certainty of it, "*I will* give thee;" for he is faithful that promised. One promise of Christ is worth all the performances of all the mightiest put together. You may depend upon this promise, not as a peradventure that may be, but as a foundation of peace that shall remain when heaven and earth have passed away. Notice, also, the *sovereignty* of it: "I will *give* it." He does not say, "I will give him the reward of what he has done," nor does he say, "I will pay him so much for his work," but "I will *give* it." "The *wages* of sin is death:" but what is the converse? not "the *wages* of righteousness is life," but "the *gift of God* is eternal life." The lost in misery will carry with them the corroding and consuming recollection, "we have just got the wages for which we laboured;" the saved in glory will carry with them what shall be the sweetest ingredient in their happiness, the happiest thought in their heart—that the brightest and most beautiful things of heaven are all by grace, not by merit at all.

Let us notice also the individuality of it—"I will give *thee*." I showed you this in preaching on the text, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Do you see, it is not "I will give to them;" but, in order that no man may miss the prescription, or lose the prospect of the reward, he says, "I will give *thee* a crown of life." Much of Christianity is personal. The question is, "What must I do to be saved?" and the answer is, "Believe

on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." It is most important that we should recollect that we are not merged in the mass; but that as we were lost personally, we must be saved personally. But each man must wash his raiment in the blood of Christ alone; each man must die alone; each man must be lost or saved alone. I believe that the most wholesome exercise is frequently to retire from the crowd and bustle and din of the world, and commune between God and our hearts alone. All great minds are much alone, all holy hearts are much alone. They may touch the crowd at a thousand points; but yet there are in every true heart great and silent depths, like the depths of the mighty ocean, that are never touched or influenced by the tides and the streams that pass over them, into which the Christian retires and communes in silence, in secresy, and in deep solemnity with the Father of spirits, and lives.

But what is the crown of life! It is not the Greek word *diadema* that is here used, which means an emperor's crown; but it is the Greek word *στέφανος*, a conqueror's crown, and relates to the crown worn by the successful combatants at the Olympic games, at which a wreath was placed on the head of the victor, to denote that he had conquered, and to dignify him in the eyes of the assembled people. These laurels withered, these bay-leaves faded away; but Christ says, "I will give to my faithful runner, who has run with boldness the race set before him,—to my faithful soldier who has fought the good fight of faith, not that bay or laurel crown, not that *στέφανος*, whose leaves shall wither and turn to corruption around the brows of him that wears it, but 'a crown of life,' an imperishable crown, a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

But my impression is, judging from the context, that this life is not the life of the soul, but the resurrection life. The whole of this epistle relates to Christ as the risen Christ. For instance, in ver. 8, "These things saith He which was dead and is alive." What was his death? His death upon the cross. What was his life? Not his own essential, divine life, of which he speaks in another epistle, but his resurrection life; the life, therefore, that is here promised is the resurrection life. Thus, in John vi. 39,

“This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day;” and at ver. 40, “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” And in ver. 44, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” And again, at ver. 54, “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day:” in all which places you perceive the resurrection is associated with immortality. The resurrection is the special promise: in II. Tim. iv. 7, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.” What day? The day that he specifies in the next clause,—“and not unto me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.” Now, that day, I conceive, we have described in Rev. xx, where we read at ver. 4, “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection”—the resurrection from among the dead. The expression “they lived and reigned,” is just a paraphrase on “the crown of life.” “They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years,” signifies, if I may translate it into the words of my text, “they wore crowns of life a thousand years.” I believe that this promise here made of a crown of life, is therefore equivalent to a promise of the first resurrection, of which all believers will partake. I have explained this to you before, and at length.* I believe there is a first and a second resurrection; else, what does the Apostle Paul mean by saying, “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead?” Every one will attain to that, for “all that

* See Apocalyptic Sketches delivered in Exeter Hall.

sleep shall rise;" but if we look into the original, the Apostle's language appears distinct and special; "If I may attain *εἰς τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν*, the resurrection from among the dead." And so the Apostle John says, "This is the first resurrection;" it is literally, "This is the resurrection, the first one;" *i. e.* the resurrection from among the dead. And we read that, when Christ appears, he will "descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first." Now I believe that when the dawn of that blessed millennium shall come, the trumpet shall sound, and there shall not be a dead brother, or a dead sister, or a dead son, or a dead dear and near one now mouldering in the tomb, but asleep in Jesus, who shall not hear and be electrified by the sound, and come forth and shine in the splendors of the resurrection morn, wearing a crown of life that fadeth not away; and that millennium, with all its beauty and its blessedness, will be but a foretaste and prelibation, or, as it were, the mere vestibule or ante-room of that everlasting glory into which the people of God shall enter and abide for ever.

Such is this crown of life, the first resurrection, the distinction of the saints, the glory of them that have fallen asleep in Jesus. It is not impossible, nay, it seems to me probable, that many who are now before me shall not fall asleep till they hear that royal sound. All things indicate we are rushing to it; all things show that it is rapidly coming on: worldly men cannot explain what the world is about; politicians cannot understand why all their schemes are failing, and all their diplomacy coming to naught; they cannot understand how it is that nations seem as if some terrible spirit had started up from the depths below, and driven them to destroy each other. It is the increasing chaos that precedes order; it is the disorganization that precedes a new combination; the world's sabbath is now close at hand. I have before told you that it has been clearly proved that the seventh thousandth year of the world will begin about A. D. 1862; it has already lasted nearly six thousand years, and according to the Jewish belief, the seventh thousand years will constitute the great year of Jubilee, "the rest that remaineth for the people

of God." It is very remarkable also, if what Clinton has established be true, that the great prophetic epochs will all terminate within five or ten years of that period. It is not for man or angel to specify the year; but we know it is for all men to be prepared; and then, they that have a sabbath heart shall be fitted for a sabbath rest; and they that have a millennial love, shall enter into millennial joy.

LECTURE XIII.

THE PROMISE.

“He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”—REV. ii. 11.

THESE are the last words of the instructive epistle addressed to the Church of Smyrna. Christ begins his address by describing himself as “the First and the Last.” He was before angels were, and he shall be over all and above all when all that is now seen has passed away. He begins by stating that he knows, in the exercise of omniscience, the works of that Church, alike her deeds of mercy and her acts of beneficence. A believer does not breathe a prayer for a sufferer, or give a cup of cold water to the thirsty, that Christ does not see, and of whom he does not say, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” “I know,” too, “thy tribulation,” the persecution you have experienced, the affliction you have suffered. “I know,” too, “thy poverty;” very little wealth in thy purse, and still less in thy coffers; externally thou art poor, but in a higher sense than man sees, “thou art rich.” Thou hast not the wealth of Cæsar, but thou hast, instead, the riches of Christ; thou art poor in the judgment of man, unspeakably rich in the estimate of the Lord. For substantial happiness now and eternal joy hereafter, it matters little how poor we are in the things of time, if we are rich in faith and in grace towards God. “And I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not”—those who pretend to be Christians, and who, under the covert of the Christian name, assail, malign, seduce, and pervert. But then he gives a prescription: “Fear none of those things;” meet them manfully in the strength of your Redeemer; resist them, but do not fear

them. Fear paralyses effort, damps exertion, is the sure precursor of defeat. "Let not your heart be troubled;" "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." "Behold, they shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days,"—ten prophetic days, or ten years. And he then gives the exhortation and the promise, "Be thou faithful unto death"—faithful to the end of life—faithful, if death should be the penalty of its exercise; and, being thus faithful unto death, "I will *give* thee a crown of life;" it is by grace, not by merit; there is no merit in a Christian's cross, there is nothing that deserves a crown in a Christian's sacrifices; and therefore the last gift of Christ shall be, like the first, free; heaven will begin as earth commenced, with a free and sovereign donative; "I will give thee a crown of life." And then he adds, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." The epistle is for all; the instruction is for us to-day, just as much as it was for the followers of Christ at Smyrna eighteen centuries ago. Here you may see, indirectly, though I do not now dwell upon it, the evidence of the personality of the Holy Spirit, "Hear what *the Spirit saith*." Socinians have tried to show that the Spirit is a figure of speech; but no one, I am sure, can honestly, or carefully and teachably read through the New Testament, without seeing that the Holy Spirit is there assumed to be, and described as, a person. "The Spirit is vexed;" "the Spirit is grieved;" "the Spirit witnesseth;" "the Spirit saith to the Churches;" expressions that can be predicated only of a person, and cannot be used of a figure of speech. But there is not only personality implied, but there is also Deity; because the speaker is the same Being who gives the epistles; and we are told that Christ, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, speaks to the one Church, and Christ, who is the First and the Last, speaks to the other Church; but to each of them the Spirit speaks also; "Hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches," teaching us that the Spirit "takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us."

Perhaps there is an allusion here to the great fact that we cannot learn the truths of the Gospel and feel them in all their saving and their sanctifying power, unless the Holy Spirit of God shall

take them, and apply them, and impress them on our hearts; and consequently the reason why so little interest is felt in the Gospel — why so many hear it, and so few feel it — is not that there is wanted greater light, more eloquence of speech, more force of language; but more prayer on our part, and a more abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit on God's part. If there be no Holy Spirit poured out upon God's Church, it is not because of want of liberality or willingness on God's part, for he constantly reasons with us, remonstrates with us, and says, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask him!"

Now what is the reason why every man in this assembly, without one single exception, this night, has not a new heart, and is not a new creature? Hear it, and carry this solemn conviction with you,—the only reason is, that he does not ask it. No man ever went, in the depth of his conviction, and bent, not the knee, but the heart, and raised, not the eye, but the soul unto his Father, and asked him for his Holy Spirit to change his heart, in the name and through the mediation of Christ the living way, and retired, permanently disappointed. None. If such an instance were produced, it would be evidence to me that God's word is not true; for what does it say? "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Let us treat God's word as an honest and *bonâ fide* book; do not dilute this expression, and deduct so much per cent. from that; do not say, This promise is figurative, and that offer is hyperbolical; but just believe what God says — no less and no more; ask, seek, and knock where he bids you, and see if God will disappoint you. I believe, my dear friends, one great mistake is, that we do not read God's book in the simplicity in which God has given it. It is the plainest of all books; it is, what Howells called it, "common sense inspired." In order to understand this book, we do not need, as some persons seem to imagine, a new edition of the Bible, but a new spirit in the reader of the Bible: when we ask for the Holy Spirit to enable us to understand the Bible, we do not ask of him to emit a plainer record, or to write a new commentary on the Bible, or to alter one jot of

it. God's book is perfect. "The Law of the Lord is perfect;" what we want is not a change in the book, but in the reader of the book; what we require is not a new Bible, but a new heart wherewith to read the old Bible; what we ask the Holy Spirit to do is, not to make the Bible more plain, but to remove from the eye of the reader of the Bible the blinding film, and in the clearest light of God's own truth to enable him thus to see all truth and light and love clearly. "Let him that hath ears to hear, hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

Next comes the promise, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." I have already explained to you, at great length, the meaning of the expression "overcome." I described in a previous lecture what I called "the Battle of Life," that great conflict in which all true Christians have a share. I showed you that where there is no conflict in the heart, there is evidence that there is no grace there. To be a conflict, we know that there must be two parties: we know that by nature we are one party, fallen, sinful, ruined, tainted; and the moment that grace comes into the human heart,—the moment that the Holy Spirit, who is the mightier one, comes into the soul that is held by Satan, who is the mighty one,—that moment there is conflict; two antagonistic powers have come into collision, and one or other must obtain the mastery. The evidence that you are Christians, is not the peacefulness that reigns within you, but the struggles, the agony, the conflict. Here we are militant. Hereafter we shall be triumphant. No man gives such strong evidence of being a child of God as he who can say, "I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, so that when I would do good, evil is present with me. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" No man gives so little evidence of the grace of God in his heart as the man who has never known what it is to grapple with a temptation that has long too easily beset him, and in the strength of Christ to come forth more than conqueror through him that loved us. I know the question is sometimes asked, Why does Christ allow a conflict to continue which He has only to interpose his omnipotent arm instantly to terminate? Christ might by the simple fiat of his will extinguish

all opposition that can be made from beneath, from around, or from above, to the advancement of his glorious kingdom, and thus, in all its beauty, its splendour, and its glory, bring in the millennial age. But He does not do so. This is enough. God has pronounced that the victory shall not be thus gained. It is most for his glory that the conflict should continue as it is. It is his will that truth should overcome falsehood, that meekness should prevail over cruelty, that grace should root out sin, and that Satan, on the very stage on which he reaped what he thought to be his everlasting laurels, and by the very victims of his wiles, should be taught that his are not laurels wreathed around the brow of a conqueror, but fillets twined around the head of a victim preparatory to a terrible and hopeless sacrifice. What God has purposed we are sure is most for his glory, and best for our good. Let us, however, bear in mind what I have stated, that conflict in the soul is the evidence of grace, and to have no consciousness of conflict is the evidence that we are still in a state of nature. Satan does not trouble you so long as you are in "peace;" but the instant that a ray of light breaks into the mind — the instant that you begin to emerge from the thralldom of sin, and to assert the hopes and privileges of a child of God, that instant the conflict begins to which the glorious promise is made, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." The manner of the conflict may vary; the fact of the conflict always remains. Each Church has her peculiar battle; each Church has her distinctive victory; the phases of each conflict may vary, the amount, the brightness and glory of the laurels may differ in degree, but the main conflict is the same, and the laurels are substantially the same also. At one time the believer is subjected to storm and assault; at another time to sapping and undermining. At one time he is burned for adhering to the truth; at another time he is denounced as a bigot, because he maintains the truth; at another time he is tempted to believe that truth and error are the same in the sight of God. To avoid the imputation of bigotry many a true Christian has been driven to compromise the truth. To avoid the charge of latitudinarianism another has become a bigot. We are exposed to dangers on the right and on the left; and we need to know that only in

the strength of the Great Captain of the faith we shall be able to overcome.

I explained in a previous lecture that this victory is obtained by faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith;" and I think I mentioned to you a very splendid illustration of the victorious energies of Faith, in the admirable, though not faultless work called the "Victory of Faith," by Archdeacon Hare, in which you have the "Victory of Faith" in all its degrees and varieties elucidated with great beauty, force, and clearness. This Faith has its retrospective action; it looks to the cross, and draws gratitude and love from it; it has its prospective reference; it looks forward to the crown, and draws down new instincts, joys, and attractions from it; but whether it looks backward to the cross on which its sins are forgiven, or forward to the crown it hopes to obtain and rejoice in for ever—it is in either and in every case, the victory that overcometh the world.

We are told, however, that there are other elements of this victory, some of which I may here enumerate. "They overcame them by the blood of the Lamb." That blood "cleanseth from all sin;" sin is the Christian's great foe; and this blood destroys it, subdues it, deprives it of its sting, neutralizes its poison, sweeps away its condemnation and its influence. It is the grand element of victory, for we are told of the saints and martyrs around the throne, that "they overcame by the blood of the Lamb."

Faith, as I have already stated, is another element of victory: "Whom resist, steadfast in faith." The word of God is another instrument of victory; "taking the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Prayer is another means of victory; "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." The Christian is to be the sentinel to watch, the soldier to fight, and the priest to pray; and only when he is all three can he overcome and escape the second death.

When a Christian overcomes, what does he overcome? First, sin; he overcomes, through the blood of Christ, its condemning power; and he overcomes, by the Spirit of Christ, its polluting power: the one is destroyed by Christ's sacrifice, the other is

subdued by Christ's Spirit: by means of the first he becomes entitled to heaven, which he forfeited by sin; and by the second he is made meet for that heaven for which he is disqualified by nature; and thus he overcomes sin, and enters into the rest that remains for the people of God.

Not the least formidable enemy which the believer has to overcome is the world. And what do I mean by the world? Not this material and mechanical economy of things: there is no sin inherent in a rosebud, or a pebble, or in the varied feathers of a bird's wing; in the beautiful stars that are above, or in flowers, those yet more beautiful stars that shine beneath; there is no sin in these; there is nothing tainted or polluted in them. It is no merit to separate from the world mechanically; it is no sin to be in the world literally. It is possible, as I have told you, to be a monk, and yet not to be a Christian. It is possible mechanically to come out of the world, and morally to be in the midst of it—to partake of its sins, to respond to its sympathies, and be contaminated with its deepest corruption. It has always appeared to me, that a person who runs into a convent in order to be a good Christian plays the coward. The Lord, the great Master of all, has placed the Christian at his post as a sentinel, and bids him watch, and wait, and pray, till he comes; and he who rushes from his post to find a retreat in a convent, seems to me to act the part, not of a Christian soldier, but of the dastardly coward. We are to be in the world, discharging the world's duties, not to run out of the world, in order to escape the world's responsibilities; Christ's prayer for his followers was, "I pray not that thou wouldest take them out of the world, but that thou wouldest keep them from the evil." Suppose that everybody had the taste and sympathy of the monk or nun, what would be the state of the world? It could not go on. The woman who teaches her offspring around her to know and love their Saviour is less of the world, whilst in it, than she who flies from the world to escape, as she supposes, its contamination, but really to avoid its responsibilities, by choosing a soft couch and an easy chair, and not a battle-field on which to overcome and gain the prize. The world, then, is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life: in short, whatever dazzles the sense, seduces the heart, leads

us to forget God. And in speaking of this victory, let me remind you, that men are overcome, not so much by what is positively sinful in the world, as by what is positively lawful. I believe more lose their souls by the excessive love of what is lawful than by the forbidden love of what is sinful in itself. You recollect the three great excuses, an epitome of all excuses besides, made for not accepting the invitation to the marriage-feast. One said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen"—a perfectly lawful purchase; but instead of being made a reason for seeking greater grace, because there were larger possessions, it was made a reason for rejecting the Gospel altogether. Another said, "I have purchased a piece of ground;" and instead of making it a reason for accepting the Gospel, and receiving strength from on high to work it, and grace from on high to make a good use of it, he made it a reason for refusing the Gospel invitation. The third said, "I have married a wife, and therefore" (I take it for granted,) "I cannot come;" as if that, instead of being a reason for new grace to sanctify the new relationship, were rather a reason for casting Christianity behind him, and plunging into all the frivolities and dissipation of the world. These three things were perfectly lawful: and yet these three lawful things were made reasons for despising and rejecting the Gospel. Are there any in this assembly so overwhelmed with the anxieties of business, that the Gospel, the Bible, and the soul are not thought of? Are there any here so occupied with the cares and the anxieties of to-morrow, that they have no time for the sacred privileges, duties, and thoughts of to-day? Take care: the world is overcoming you; not a sinful world, but a lawful world. It is possible to perish by the excessive love of the lawful in the world, as it is to perish by the forbidden lust of what is positively sinful in the world. But they who are warned are fore-armed; they who know the enemy are prepared to meet him, and "he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

You will also have to meet and overcome afflictions. The Apostle Paul met them and overcame them. "Troubled on every side, but not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

You may also have to overcome persecution. And what is the

best way to overcome it? not by persecuting in turn. When an enemy calls you by a nickname, do not retaliate; it is the commencement of a fire that may blaze from earth to heaven. "Overcome evil with good." What a splendid precept is that! Show me the like of it in the maxims of Seneca, in the philosophy of Epictetus, in the eloquence of Cicero, in the morals of Socrates. You cannot. This course is not only the best Christianity, but it is the highest policy. You know quite well, that if, when you are persecuted, reproached, ill-treated, you retaliate, the battle becomes fiercer and fiercer, and infinite damage is done to the cause of Christ; but when the brother who is in the right goes to the brother who is in the wrong, disarms his enmity by love, subdues his anger by kindness, soothes his inveterate hostility by friendship, he has "overcome evil with good;" the foe is extinguished, and they who met in bitter enmity, part in friendship, as becomes followers of their common Lord. Thus, then, we overcome evil with good, and are ranked among those who shall not be hurt of the second death.

I have thus noticed both the battle and the victory that follows; I will now allude, in as brief terms as I can, to the nature of that expression by which the future punishment of the lost is characterised—the second death. It is one of those themes which are too awful for frail man to speak on; and yet it is a truth enunciated in Scripture so plainly and so frequently, that that minister of the Gospel is neither faithful to his trust, nor dutiful to his people, who shrinks from inculcating what seems to him, and may appear to you by going to the source from which he draws his light, to be the mind of the Spirit of God. This second death is described in the parallel passages which I have examined at length, in such terms as these; II. Thess. i. 9: "Punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Matt. xxv. 41: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Notice that last expression: the fire is "everlasting;" but for whom is it prepared? it is not "prepared for you," it is not meant for you, it is not God's purpose that you should be plunged into it; it is prepared for the fallen angels, and if you are precipitated into it, it is in spite of, and not as the result of the preparation of God.

In Rev. xx. 6, it is said, "Blessed is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." In Matt. xxv. 30, "Outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." In II. Pet. ii. 17, "To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." Again, it is called repeatedly "the day of wrath;" tribulation, and anguish, and destruction;" "wrath to come;" the "resurrection of condemnation;" the "wages of sin;" these are some of the scriptural expressions by which this second death is denominated; and if these descriptions have any meaning, it is plain that this second death is not annihilation. Some persons have tried to prove that the lost are annihilated; and one writer has endeavored to prove that life is the gift of the Gospel, and annihilation the natural consequence of the rejection of it. I think that philosophically this is absurd; scripturally it is untrue, and so it is evil. There is distinct evidence that there is in man something that death does not destroy. Have you not seen the whole body verging upon utter ruin, scarcely any physical power, scarcely any vigour left, and yet there has burst forth from that ruin a peacefulness, a joy, ideas, hopes, and prospects so brilliant, that you scarcely could conceive that the person who gave utterance to them was the person whom you had seen and pronounced to be dull and stupid in the days of health and strength? Have you not seen, that when the outward fabric has been just trembling on the verge of entire destruction, the soul has seemed to light its torch, as it were, at the expiring embers of mortality, and shine forth with a splendour and a glory which intimated that the first tides of the everlasting sea were touching it, the first beams of an unsetting sun were beginning already to irradiate it; and so, furnishing in this simple fact evidence that the soul does not die with the body; that the inhabitant, good or evil, does not expire when the house goes to ruin; that the jewel, redeemed or lost, is not destroyed when the casket is broken up?

Every description of the future punishment of the lost seems to me to be associated with their sensibility in that state. What is meant by "fire," if there be no sensibility to its pain in those that are its victims? What is meant by the "worm that never dies," if there be no consciousness in those who are exposed to its

sting? What is meant by "the wrath of God abiding upon them," if they be annihilated? Does not the expression "the wrath of God abideth on him," imply that he is sensible of that wrath, and is enduring all the penalty of it? and, if so, then he is not annihilated; when he dies, he lives. The lost in ruin shall live with all the consciousness of their consuming curse, and the saved in glory shall live in all the sweetness of their unspeakable and glorious felicity and joy. This second death is associated with all that is exclusively evil. Every picture of the state of the lost contains only what is exclusively evil. Take away from this world those gleams of primeval beauty, of holiness, and happiness, that linger in its untrodden places, and occasionally flash forth from it; take away from this earth all the traces of its young glory—leave nothing but sin and sinful men in it; and what a terrible world would it be! and yet would this be a faint miniature of hell! You know how a delicate mind shrinks from the contact of the impure in this world; you know how a holy man dreads the language and shrinks from breathing the air of the unholy, the polluted, and the guilty. Think, then, what the state of the lost must be, when all is contamination, impurity, unholiness—all that is horrible to a saint, and must be intolerable even to the unhappy victims who have to endure it unmingled for ever and ever.

And in the second death, too, there will be let loose every evil passion, every unholy propensity. I doubt, if there is in hell a literal fire, any more than I believe that there is a literal living worm. The language used is, I think, figurative, and meant to denote the misery, the distress, and the woe of them that are there. It seems designed to show, by appealing to the strongest experience of humanity, what are the misery and anguish which are the doom of the lost. It is an intimation of the effect of letting loose, unchecked, all impure, hateful, and unholy human passions, that we may in some degree conceive the terrible effects of the collision of ambition, of hatred, of envy, of sensuality. It requires no material fire additional to unsanctified human passions to constitute a hell too terrible for human language to express. It is enough to know there will be no presence of God there; that his curse will rest upon all, and his blessing over-

shadow none; that his wrath unmingled and unceasing will be felt for ever—that conscience will be restored to its highest sensibility, and memory conjure up each stinging recollection of the past. So will it be hell. The words used by Milton to describe the condition of the lost will be true of this state.

“Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells. Hail, horrors!
Hail, infernal world! and thou, profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor—me! miserable,
Whither shall I fly? Which way I fly is hell—
Myself am hell.
And in the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threatening to devour him, opens wide,
To which the hell he suffers seems a heaven.”

I have dwelt upon a picture charged with so awful colors, only to lead you to estimate, from a sight of the depth into which sin has sunk humanity, the magnificence and the might of that mercy which sent a Saviour to shed his blood to redeem us, and gave a Bible to make known to us the glad tidings of that glorious Gospel which proclaims deliverance to the captive, healing to the sick, sight to the blind, and everlasting life to all that believe, though once dead in trespasses and sins. I gather from the whole of this promise, “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death,” that the whole blame rests on ourselves if we are doomed to be precipitated into that yawning ruin. It lies with ourselves, (I say it advisedly,) to escape that ruin and enter into everlasting joy. For, in the first place, I cannot find in the Bible, from its commencement to its close, that there is any irresistible decree that condemns us to everlasting perdition. Every soul that reaches the realms of glory, does so by free, unmerited, sovereign grace; every soul that tastes of the second death, cleaves to so dire a doom in spite of a thousand protesting voices and obstructing elements. The saved in heaven will ever have the recollection, we have done nothing but what is decreed—Christ did all for us, from the first breath of life to the latest pulse of glory. The lost in hell will ever have the corroding agony of the thought, “I did it all myself, and nobody put me here contrary to my will, or against my own purpose, progress, and knowledge.”

We shall feel in the realms of the saved, "it is all by grace;" and they will feel who are in the realms of the lost that it is all their own doing. Hence, the lost in hell are as such, suicides; they destroyed themselves, and none did it for them. Every step that the sinner takes to misery, he takes in spite of a thousand commands—in the face of ten thousand warnings, in defiance of eloquent entreaty, pressing remonstrance, earnest warning, and threatening. Every step that a sinner takes towards everlasting perdition, he marches against the opposing point of God's own sword. He has to work and fight and clear his way to hell—he works hard at sin and earns justly its terrible wages. God tells us in his own word that "He is not willing that any should perish." I believe these words strictly and literally; "He will have all men to be saved." This is not make-believe. I accept his invitation, "Turn unto me; why will ye die?" and I believe his invitation, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." I have full confidence in the words, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Now I cannot explain away these words: I take them just as God has pronounced them; and I hold them to be strictly and literally true. Then, my dear friends, is it not a very solemn thing for you to know that you are welcome to the bosom of God, and and that yet you will not come? that you are invited to the realms of glory, and yet you will not hearken? Is it not a very solemn thing to know that there is instant, glorious pardon for every sinner that will, and yet that any man should retire without accepting the proffered boon, to criticise the speaker's style, or to review the preacher's manner, or to engage in any conversation that will keep the arrow from the conscience, the truth from contact with his soul? Again, if I look at what God's provision is, I see every reason to lead me to infer that it is not God's purpose or God's decree that any should be lost who are willing to be saved. When we were without strength Christ died for us: when Christ rose again, he sent his Holy Spirit to intercede and plead within us. What is the utterance of that beautiful book, the Bible—what is the eloquence from ten thousand pulpits—what are those lingering instincts in the depths of

your heart—those trembling fears, reminiscences, protests, in the legislative chambers of conscience, but the unspent accents of the voice of God warning you, entreating you not to die, but to overcome the world, and so not be hurt of the second death? I repeat it then, again, that there is mercy and forgiveness in the blood of Christ for all that will, and if any man taste the bitterness of the second death, let him recollect that he does so for no reason upon earth but that he turned his back upon God, and directed his face to perdition.

I now close my remarks upon the epistle to the Church of Smyrna. The present state of Smyrna fulfils the prophecy. Christianity exists, and though very dark, yet lingers in the midst of it.

“It is a city of Ionia, in Asia Minor; it was one of the most ancient and flourishing of the colonies which the Ionian Greeks founded on the Asiatic side of the *Ægean* sea; and the excellence of its situation, on one of the finest bays in the world, has saved it from being involved in the fate which has overwhelmed most of the ancient cities of the *Anatolia*. It claimed to be the birth-place of *Homer*, and several modern critics are of opinion, that the claim is better founded than that of any of the six other cities which contended for the honour. It is mentioned only once in Scripture, as one of the *Seven Apocalyptic Churches*. (*Rev. ii. 1.*) The angel of the Church at Smyrna, when the book of *Revelation* was written, is stated by ecclesiastical historians to have been the venerable *Polycarp*, a disciple of the Evangelist *St. John*. The message to the Church at Smyrna is an affectionate forewarning of the persecution to which it was about to be exposed, and of which *Polycarp* was the earliest and most distinguished victim.

“The modern town of Smyrna does not occupy the precise position of the ancient city; in consequence of the earthquakes to which the southern hills were exposed, the citizens gradually removed farther and farther to the north, until the original precincts were quite deserted. The present city is divided into two parts, the upper and lower; the first being inhabited by *Turks* and *Jews*, the second by *Armenians*, *Greeks*, and *Franks*. All the fine and remarkable buildings are in the lower town; it con-

tains the markets, bazaars, shops, and stores, and it exhibits all the activity and animation belonging to a great commercial mart and a crowded seaport. The upper town is bounded by extensive cemeteries, and appears almost as tranquil as those abodes of the dead; the houses are mean, the windows closely barred like those of prisons, and the streets all but deserted.

“The Italians call Smyrna the ‘Flower of the Levant,’ and some French travellers have named it the ‘Miniature Paris of the East;’ but, though far superior to most Turkish cities, it is not quite deserving of these flattering appellations. Fifteen hundred years ago, Strabo complained that the ancient city was deficient in its sewerage, and the modern city is equally in want of this necessary accommodation. Hence the centre of the narrow streets is usually a filthy channel choked with all sorts of impurities, from whence pestilential exhalations arise, which renders Smyrna the very metropolis of plague and fever. Within the last few years some good streets have been laid out in the lower town, and several excellent houses built by merchants in the suburbs; but still the old streets are so narrow that a loaded camel fills them up from one side to the other, and the passenger who meets one of these animals often finds it difficult to get out of the way.

“One of the circumstances which strikes a European most forcibly on visiting Smyrna, is the great diversity of the nations which have contributed to supply it with inhabitants. The citizens are distinct from each other in religion, language, dress, and manners; each race has its own ceremonies, its own feasts, and even its own calendar. It is not at all unusual for one race to celebrate a festival on a day devoted by another race to penance and fasting. The Turks close their shops on Friday, the Jews on Saturday, and the Armenians, Greeks, and Franks on Sunday. There is no intermarriage nor social communication between these different races; they never meet each other except in the market-place, and they only converse together on the price of cotton and opium, or the rate of exchange between piastres and dollars. The distinction of race is more strongly marked amongst the women than amongst the men. The Greek and Frank ladies have their faces uncovered, the Armenian and

Jewish allow about half of the countenance to be seen, while the Turkish women hide every feature but the eyes. A stranger would be led to believe that more languages were spoken in Smyrna than in any city that has existed since Babel. On one side caravans and strings of camels pour in from every part of Central Asia, Syria, and Arabia; on the other, fleets crowd the harbour from all the maritime states of Europe and America. The general medium of communication is the *Lingua Franca*, a barbarous jargon compounded of bad Italian and worse Arabic, together with a plentiful admixture of vulgarisms and nautical phrases from every language in Europe. Religious toleration has always been more freely granted in Smyrna than in any other Turkish city; and when there has been any outbreak of Mussulman fanaticism, it has been directed against the Jews and Greeks, rarely against the Europeans. The population of Smyrna is supposed to exceed one hundred thousand, and it is rapidly increasing, especially since the police of the place has been improved and greater security afforded to life and property. In no place is the decline of Turkish fanaticism more apparent, for the European consuls are ever ready to resent the slightest insult offered to Christians whatever may be their denomination. In consequence of this protection the processions of the Greek and Latin Churches pass freely through the streets, and some of the latter are so gorgeously conducted that a spectator might suppose himself in a city of Italy rather than of Turkey."

It has been noticed that this Church and that of Philadelphia are the only two to whom a promise of vitality is given, and in consequence they are the only two of the seven churches of Asia at this moment in which there is anything like a considerable Christian Church left.

We learn from all this, and from the history especially of the Church of Smyrna, that the strength of the Church of Christ, whether Church local, or Church provincial, or Church national, or Church universal, is not the acts of parliament that establish it, nor the wealth in the pockets of those who occupy its pews and so support it, but the living Christianity in the hearts of its ministers and its people, and the strength of our nation's Church

will be found in the days of trial that are coming on, to consist in the living religion of its people. Give me Presbyterian Church, Episcopal Church, Independent, or Wesleyan, but give me, above and beyond them all, a living Church. I care not so much for the shell if the kernel be there; I mind not so much the beauty of the chasing or the splendour of the lamp if pure oil be in it, and the flame that is lit from the eternal altar blaze upon it. I care not for the shape of the candlestick, if it bear a candle lighted from on high to lead me to the Lamb. Depend upon it that the day is coming, ay, and is already come, when, if Churches fall back upon the length of their ecclesiastical lineage, or upon the wealth of those that constitute their congregations, or upon tradition, or upon the state, they will find that they lean on a foundation that will assuredly fail them. Nothing but living, Protestant Christianity, will avail us in the days that are soon to overtake us. Luther said, the doctrine of justification by faith is the article of a standing or a falling Church; we may add, that regeneration by the Holy Spirit is the article of a living or a dying Church.

LECTURE XIV.

THE FAITHFUL MARTYR.

“And to the angel of the Church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.”—REV. ii. 12, 13.

BEFORE proceeding to unfold the commendation here bestowed upon his Church by the great Head of that Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, I should like to show you what I omitted in my closing discourse upon the Epistle to the Church of Smyrna, last Sunday evening, the evidence of the fulfilment of all the promises contained in that address. You observe that the address to the Church of Smyrna is characterised by special eulogy: “I know thy works, and thy tribulation, and thy poverty, but thou art rich;” “fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer;” “thou shalt have tribulation ten days;” “be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Throughout the whole of this beautiful address to the Church of Smyrna there is scarcely a syllable of censure; all is commendation, all indicates that this Church was one of the most faithful and devoted of the seven; and we may expect, if the principle I have endeavored to establish be correct, viz., that God deals with Churches just according to their faithfulness, that He will have dealt in mercy and in love with the then faithful, though now waning, Church of Smyrna. To show you, therefore, how strikingly this has been fulfilled, I read to you what Mr. Hartwell Horne has collected from various sources, explanatory of the present state of the Church at Smyrna; which proved that whilst every one of the

seven Churches, with one single exception besides, has utterly ceased because of its unfaithfulness, this Church and the Church of Philadelphia, the only two who were more or less faithful among the seven, exist, in greater or less purity, at the present day. I admit the eulogium is not very splendid; it is, however, sufficient to show that whilst Ephesus has left her scarcely a trace of its primeval Christianity, Smyrna still exists as a Christian Church, the Scriptures are read in it, and, more or less imperfectly, Christianity is proclaimed in the midst of it.

I now pass on to the consideration of the epistle I have read. The last epistle, addressed to Smyrna, breathes, as I told you, almost unmingled eulogium. The epistle addressed to Pergamos is full of censure, admonition, and rebuke, though the portion I have selected for this evening's exposition is in some degree eulogistic, commending the good that was in her before it proceeded to rebuke the evil of which she has been guilty. The characteristic attribute here given to Christ is, "He that hath the sharp sword with two edges." This is a portion of the picture contained in the first chapter, and here repeated, "He had a sharp two-edged sword going out of his mouth;" and that sharp two-edged sword is defined by the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he tells us, "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The meaning of the word "quick," as applied to the Bible, is, that it is "living;" that it is not a dead history of an age that has passed away, and to be regarded like an old almanac, or a picture of scenes that have expired; but that it is a living Bible, which speaks to the nineteenth century with as great pertinency and as full authority as it spoke to the first in which it was written; no philosophy has ever soared above it, no researches have ever dug below it; it is still the Book of books, as truly so, and visibly more so in the century in which our lot is cast, as it was the Book of books in the age in which it was first penned. The Bible never waxes old; humanity never outgrows the Bible. There never will be a day when the Bible shall be inapplicable to man, or when man's attainments shall be so high, and man's

progress so brilliantly developed, that he will be enabled to walk in the light of his own mind, without the aid of that lamp to his feet and light to his path which has been kindled from the upper glory.

This description of it, as "a sharp sword with two edges," denotes, perhaps, that it sweeps away with the one edge the veil that conceals man's heart from God, and with the other edge the veil that conceals God's love, and mercy, and forgiveness from man; and thus it brings God, who is by nature remote, and man, who is by nature sinful and averse, into close, affectionate, eternal communion and fellowship. This sword is spoken of as proceeding from Christ's mouth; probably it is said to come from Christ's mouth, and to be held by him, in order to teach us that unless Christ wield it, it cannot have any saving effect. Even God's word itself, so fraught with power, so quick with life, so instinct with eloquence, will fall cold and dead on man's heart, unless the God that inspired it, accompany, apply, and impress it. What an awful truth is this! What an evidence of the corruption of man's heart, that God's word alone cannot raise it, nor God's truth alone sanctify it—if it need God's omnipotence to apply God's inspired truth before that heart can be sanctified, how hard must it be! This sword, of so keen and ethereal temper that, like the Damascus blade of old, it can trim a feather or cleave a bar of iron, needs yet, in order to be productive of a saving effect, the hand that made it to wield and to apply it.

Perhaps there is a second sense in which Christ is represented here as armed with this sword: it may denote that he comes in judgment. We have a parallel passage to this in verse 16: "Repent, or else I will come and fight against them with the sword of my mouth;" and, Rev. xiv. 15, "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations." It may denote, therefore, that, as this Church is particularly sinful, Christ comes to that Church in his judicial capacity. I may here notice again the truth I have so often endeavoured to impress upon you, that God deals with Churches, and with nations, in a way totally different from that in which he deals with individuals. In the perfect state of the Church, the Church national has no existence; in heaven there are no ecclesiastical

corporations; they are therefore rewarded, or they are punished, in time. So also there will be no nations in heaven; they exist but in time; their punishments or their rewards are, therefore, felt in time. When God deals with a Church, he wastes it, if it be sinful; he blesses it, if it be faithful: and when he deals with a nation, he prospers it, if it cleaves to him; he forsakes it, and leaves it to its own counsels, if it apostatizes from him. He therefore comes to this Church, not in the attitude of love, but of righteous retribution. He comes to the individual sinner, beseeching him to believe, and repent, and live; but he comes to a sinful Church in his judicial capacity, with the sharp two-edged sword, to visit and to punish her.

But he begins, as I have said, with an eulogy of what is good; that is our true way to rebuke another. Never break forth at once in censure, when you go to tell a brother his sins; first begin with praising what is good, before you attempt to censure what is wrong; you will thus have opened the way to the heart, for the arrow that is feathered with love will fly the swiftest, and pierce the deepest; applaud the good that is in thy brother before thou proceedest to rebuke the evil that is also in him. So our Lord here says, "I know thy works." He then adds, "I know, too, where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." That is, I am quite aware of the trials to which you are exposed; and I am well pleased with this, that "thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith;" and that, too, in the worst of times, "wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr." How beautiful is the statement here made by our Lord, "I know thy works!" There is not a secret thought of benevolence that does not, like a ray of light, rise from the earth, and shoot its splendours upon the throne of Deity; there is not a deed of benevolence, however secret and sequestered that deed may be, that has not an echo in heaven, distinctly heard above the seven thunders. There is nothing that a believer does, or desires to do where he has not the power to do it, for his glory, and for the honour of his name, that Christ does not see. Therefore, my dear brethren, be satisfied to do good in the eyes of Christ; mind not that no trumpet sounds when you do it, and that no register records your beneficence, when the eye of Him to whom all hearts are open sees

it; and the hand that was nailed to the cross for us will shower down abundant blessings in answer to it.

Especially does our Lord sympathise here with the situation of his Church. "I know where thou dwellest;" I am fully alive to all the difficulties of your position; I am perfectly aware that you are tossing like a bark upon the stormy wave; I see you, like a lonely rose blooming in the desert alone; I see you, like a fair floweret amid the Alpine snows; or in the bosom of the avalanche, where one can scarcely anticipate you will last for an hour. I know all the difficulties and the perils of your position, and I sympathise with you. My dear friends, in the great conflict in which the human heart is plunged, to have, even in this world, one who has a response of kindness for all our trials,—to have, even in this world, one who ever has an expression of sympathy with our sufferings,—takes off half the pressure; it takes away the bitterest sting of all the ills with which we are surrounded: but to know that the most silent sufferer is not without sympathy,—that the most lonely sufferer is knit by an electric chain to Him who sits upon the throne, is sympathised with and interceded for,—should indeed make us feel that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory" that is now realized, as well as that which shall be revealed to us. Christ thus sympathises with his Church, "I know where thou dwellest;"—and now to apply this to ourselves. Some of you, perhaps, are placed in a family where the worship of God is neglected,—where the Bible is a joke,—where prayer is mocked at,—and where religion is pronounced to be fanaticism, and your anxiety about your soul the very essence of folly. You are in a trying position. Or some young man in this assembly is in a house of business, where one is a skeptic, another is a Romanist, a third is a blasphemer, and a fourth is a sinful, abandoned, and profligate man. Christ whispers to the member of that godless family,—Christ speaks to the Christian in that atheistic house of business: "I know where thou dwellest;" I feel the difficulties of your position; I truly sympathise with you. But you ask, what are you to do in such a position? Look to Him who has expressed his sympathy with you for divine strength to sustain you. Just feel what I have often told you, that every Christian is a missionary: you are a

domestic missionary, or a missionary in some sphere where missionaries are unknown. Christ has placed you there; his sympathy is expressed towards you; his strength will be made perfect in your weakness. You are a soldier in the van,—shrink not because the enemy is mighty; you bear consecrated colors,—furl them not till the Great Captain of the faith shall command you. Let the lustre of Christian love, rather than the loudness of Christian profession, draw the blasphemer, the ungodly, and those that deny Christ, to accept the Gospel. Do not speak to them so much divine words, but rather live in the midst of them divine life; and though your influence be silent, though it be slow, though it fall soft like the dew, it will, like the dew, be saturating also, and you will see the fruit of it after many days. If you are light, your rays will be seen; if you are salt, your influence will be felt. Do not all covet to be the lights of the world, because they are seen and admired by man; but far rather covet to be the secret and unseen salt of the world, which gains no credit from the world around, but which works with certainty, though with secrecy, and keeps the world from corruption, and mankind from ruin. So, my dear friends, wherever you are, where God is not honored, or where the Gospel is blasphemed and denied, feel this, that you have a divine mission. You are not there by chance; there is no such thing as chance in the heights or in the depths: you may find “chance” in a heathen’s pantheon, but never is there such a word in a Christian’s Bible, and never was there known such an influence in a Christian’s life. There is no chance in little things, or in great things. You know that little circumstances are often the hinges of great events. A spark struck from the heel of a random revolutionist may ignite a capital, and throw an empire into conflagration. Many a one can testify that it was the turning of a corner that was the turning of his life; it was what the world calls an “accidental” stumbling into an “accidental” chapel, where you heard an “accidental” sermon, that was the commencement of a life which shall not cease until that life is lost in the happiness of the beatific vision, and he that now suffers in secret shall soar and shine with the cherubim around the throne of God. Your position, therefore, is a divine one. The same hand that placed

me in the pulpit placed you in that shop; and you can glorify God behind that counter, just as I may glorify God by preaching from this place. And the man who thinks he cannot serve God as a servant, depend upon it, would be no better if he were exalted to be a master. We are to seize the circumstances that surround us, and make them vehicles of good; we are, in the sphere in which God has placed us, to let our light shine before men: it is God's part to fix the sphere; it is our part to do the duty that devolves upon us. We are not responsible for the position in which God has placed us; but we are responsible for the faithfulness with which we act in that place.

Having thus noticed the locality of this Church, our Lord pronounces a beautiful eulogium upon it: "Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith." What is Christ's name? It is defined by Him who testifies of Christ, the Spirit of God: "This is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness;" and again, "his name shall be Immanuel, God with us;" "God manifest in the flesh." Let me look at these two syllables of Christ's name; this name, thus composed, the faithful martyr holds fast.

First of all, his name is, "The Lord our Righteousness." Here that glorious doctrine, which is the root of all our Christianity, is involved. Justification by faith is not a doctrine that was discovered at the Reformation, but it was a truth that had existed for fifteen centuries, though obscured and darkened by man. The Reformation was not the discovery of a new star in a new orbit, but simply the scattering of the clouds that concealed an ancient star, whose rays had been intercepted overhead. The doctrine, then, involved in this name, "The Lord our Righteousness," is that great doctrine, justification by faith. What a glorious truth is it! Christ was made our sin, that we might be made his righteousness: he took our place, our guilt, our condemnation; we are elevated into his place, his merits, his perfection: iniquity was laid upon Christ which was not his own; righteousness is laid upon us which is not ours. Christ was condemned for another man's sin; we shall be justified by another Man's righteousness. Our death-deserving sin was upon Christ as a load that crushed him to the tomb; his life-deserving right-

eousness shall be laid upon us, as an eagle's wing that shall lift us to glory. God saw iniquity in Christ where the world saw none; God will see perfect righteousness in us, where the world can see none. It was just in God to let forth the expressions of his wrath upon that innocent Lamb, because he wore our tainted fleece; and it will be but faithful and just in God to pour down the expressions of his love upon us, because we wear his spotless righteousness. When Christ died, there was nothing in him worthy of death; when we shall be accepted at the judgment-seat, there will be nothing in us worthy of life. He reached death through another's sins; we shall enter into heaven by another, even Christ's, righteousness. Hold fast this name; this is the destruction and the death-blow of all Puseyism and Popery together. He that grasps it firmly, and sees it clearly, will never be daunted by the partial apostasy of the one, nor be plunged into the terrible corruption of the other.

The other part of Christ's name, which his Church holds fast, is "Immanuel, God with us;" "God manifest in the flesh." Here is another part of Christ's name which we are called upon to hold fast. This I have ever wished to impress upon you,—that however it may suit philosophers, and men who pronounce themselves wise, to speak of God out of Christ and independent of the Gospel, yet their God is, when we come to examine their definition of him, a mass of inconsistency and contradiction. Let me look at God as he is revealed in nature. We can see from nature that there is a God; it is written on the skies, it is engraven on the earth; you cannot sail upon the ocean's bosom, or traverse the sandy desert, without seeing everywhere the footprints of a God: and though a certain fool—for that is the true epithet, because the scriptural one—talks of "vestiges of creation," in which he could not see vestiges of a God; depend upon it, it was not because the footprints of Deity were so faint, but because his vision was so dim: there is certainly a God revealed in nature; but there is nothing in nature whereby we can discover what that God is to us. For instance, I feel that I am a sinner: the great question that must strike every one who does not receive the Gospel is, How will God deal with me? If God be just, will he punish every sinner?

You will not admit that; for then the whole world would be consumed: if, then, God be merciful, will he pardon every sin and save every sinner? You cannot admit that—it would be encouragement in crime. Then I ask you, How deep will God's justice descend in punishing? how high will God's mercy ascend in pardoning? You cannot tell. The God of the sceptic, that is, the God who is discovered in nature, must be unjust in order to be merciful, and unmerciful in order to be just—a mass of contradiction; but the God who is delineated in the pages of the Gospel—who shines in the countenance of Jesus, has a Legislator's sovereignty, a Father's love, a Creator's power—all combined in the forgiveness of the greatest sin, and in the acceptance of the greatest sinner. Hold fast, then, that blessed name, "Immanuel, God with us;" "God manifest in the flesh." In nature, God is above us; we cannot reach him: in the Law, God is against us; we dare not approach him: in the Gospel, God is our Father, waiting to welcome us to his bosom, that we may draw near to him in Christ, and call him "Abba, Father."

Now the commendation of this Church, then, is that she held fast this name: and in this beautiful trait developed here, there is indicated the catholicity of that Church. She did not, like the Corinthian Church, of which Paul speaks, say, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas;" she did not call herself the Pergamosite, or the Antipasite, from the most eminent saint and martyr in her history; but she held fast that name which was pronounced in scorn in Antioch, but which shall sound as the key-note of the song of the everlasting jubilee—that name which was first—which shall be last—which is above every name, to which nations shall bow and kings shall confess—that name which all shall bless, and in which all shall be blessed. We rejoice that that blessed name grows in brightness and prominence every day. The dim shadows of twilight begin to depart in proportion as the bright beams of the ascending sun begin to fall upon the world.

That sun, the Sun of Righteousness, is now horizontal; he has risen only a little way above the horizon; the consequence is, that all Churches cast long shadows, and those shadows reveal

their imperfections, clearly, sharply, and distinctly; but when that glorious Sun shall rise above the horizon — when he shall cease to be horizontal, and become vertical — when he shall mount his meridian throne — then all will be light, and no Church will have a shadow; then all minor names shall be lost in this — the stars of the sky shall be the letters that disclose it — the stones of the earth shall be engraven with it; it shall mingle with the voice of the winds, and the chime of the sea-waves, and Christ shall be all and in all, and Christ and Christian the only names in the universe of God. In this imperfect dispensation we are prone to love party more than principle; the Church's name, more than Christ's name. One man would Judaize the world; another would Anglicize the world; another would Tractarianize the world; another would Episcopalize the world: and I do not think that we are exempt, for some of us would Presbyterianize the world: but in proportion as we have more of the love and power of Christ in our hearts, we shall desire neither to Romanize, nor to Episcopalize, nor to Judaize, but to Christianize it. Let us, my dear friends, hold fast this name; let it be the key-note in our songs; let it be the most musical utterance we know; let it be deepest in the recesses of our souls; let it be not only written in our creed, but inscribed upon our hearts — be in us, and to us, and through us all. Now what is the secret of the rise of this name's universal supremacy? All plans have been tried to produce unity; a very old and a very favourite plan was to persecute; and when one man did not agree with another, to kill him, as if murdering the man would mend his conscience, or save his soul. Another plan was to try ignorance, supposing that when the matter of division is left unknown all opinions will be alike, and there will be no question or dispute where there is no knowledge of the subject of the question. Another plan has been tried in London, and one in which I rejoiced to take a share, though it has also failed, because the time is not yet come, namely, bringing together true Christians of all sects in that beautiful, but so far unsuccessful experiment, called the Evangelical Alliance, and hoping that as we knew each other better, we should love each other more: I believe that the result has shown that union is just as far off as ever; and that no mechanical ar-

rangements, no diplomatic arrangements, no protocols, no committee-room management, no platform speeches, will make unity; there is but one cure for divisions, there is but one secret of unity — Christ's love in a man's heart; and then when all love Christ with all their heart, they will love each other without interruption, suspension, and decay.

Having spoken thus much on "holding fast Christ's name," let me notice the next point mentioned in the eulogy pronounced on this Church, "thou hast not denied my faith." In the New Testament, a negative of this kind is meant to be the strongest affirmative; and to say, "thou hast not denied my faith," is equivalent to saying, "thou hast not been ashamed of me; thou hast boldly and unflinchingly maintained my cause; thou hast not been ashamed to avow who you are, and whom you serve." It is equivalent to what the Apostle says, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." Now let me ask, whether there is anything in Christianity to lead us to deny it? Is there anything in the Gospel of which any one should be ashamed? Shall I look at its Author? "the Lord of glory;" "God manifest in the flesh?" an aureole of glory around his cradle; a halo circumscribing his cross; his meanest act (if any can be called mean where all was magnificent) indicating the sympathies of man, but also the power of God. A star guided his worshippers to his birthplace; kings came to minister to him; angels were his body-guard; the winds his messengers; his followers, the diseased he had healed; they that praised him, the dumb whose lips he had opened, and made eloquent with gratitude and love to God. Is there anything, then, of which to be ashamed in him who is the Author of Christianity? Is there anything, I ask in the next place, in the foundation of the Gospel to lead us to be ashamed of it? Prophets predicted it, poets sung its advent; types, ceremonies, and forms foreshadowed it; sickness, and sorrow, and death fled at its approach; and there is evidence the most overwhelming that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; the evidence, I have told you, accumulates every day, till the Baptist's cry, pronounced alone upon the banks of Jordan, shall be heard from a nation's lips, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" Is there any-

thing, in the third place, to lead us to be ashamed of Christ, if we look at the means by which it was promoted? Mahometanism was promoted by force; the Koran or the scymetar was the dread alternative; I should be ashamed of a religion promoted by such means as these. Popery has been propagated by lying wonders, by fraud, by auto-da-fés, inquisitions, and anathemas. I should be no less ashamed of a religion promoted by these means. But the Gospel speaks thus: If the sword is to be unsheathed, it must be by the foes, not by the friends of Christ; if the fagot is to be gathered, it must be kindled by another hand than that of a Christian. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal;" and therefore, says the Apostle, they are "mighty." Christianity gathers its laurels from the glories of Jesus, from the sorrows it heals, from the temporal and eternal blessings which it showers upon mankind; and proves itself to come from the God of all light, by its shining as the light of morn, alike through the poor man's casement and the noble's oriel window.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel:" we have no reason to deny it, but every reason to glory and to rejoice in it. If we look again at the effects of the Gospel, what do I see but everything to lead me not to deny it—not to be ashamed of it? It has everywhere made the wilderness rejoice; it has made the desert to blossom as the rose; it has removed all that poisons society, and implanted all that sweetens it; it has made the churl liberal; it has transformed all it has touched into its own beautiful likeness; it has placed the hopes of glory within the reach of all; it has turned sinners into saints, and the bondsmen of Satan into the sons of God. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel:" I have no reason to deny it, but every reason to glory and to rejoice in it. Nor have we any reason to deny this Gospel if we look at the success with which it has been crowned, and with which it is more and more followed every day. I see indeed the true Church become more intense, distinct, defined; the world become more distinct and defined also. As I have told you before, the time comes when all "shams" will be broken up, and all things will find their polarity: everything is gradually becoming more earnest, real, intense; and soon, very soon—sooner than you dream—we shall have real Papists, real infidels; and, blessed be God, real

Christians also : and then, when the sifting time comes, the chaff will take its flight, the living seed alone will remain.

My dear friends, each man right soon will take his place. All things are drawing nearer and nearer to their respective centres ; the world is becoming more worldly ; the Church is becoming more Christian, and therefore more distinct from the world, not by mechanical separation, but by moral superiority ; not by leaving this section and joining that, but by being more detached from sin, and more alive to God ; and that blessed day draws nearer and nearer when Christianity shall reach her culminating glory, and under its bright and blessed influence war shall cease, disease shall depart, death shall be destroyed, and all nations who now seize upon each other, and are exasperated against each other, and drawn into a state of unnatural and horrible antagonism, shall then become one lovely and beautiful sisterhood, and all the kingdoms of the world one holy, happy family, singing a new song, ever new, because never exhausted, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth !"

I have said, all are taking their places ; let me ask you, have you taken yours ? Let every man ask himself, What am I ? what is my place ? My dear friends, there are but two consistent men—the man who rejects the Bible, and deliberately treats it as an imposture ; and the man who takes it to his heart, and loves it, and prizes it as the very word of God. There is no spot on which you will stand long between evangelical Protestant Christianity, and downright cold, freezing indifference. There is no point between. On which side do you stand ? Is it a reasonable thing to settle every question, and leave this question unsettled, What shall be the state of my soul with God ? There is no man in this assembly who can insure his life for to-morrow ; there is no man in this assembly, let him have a heart that beats without a wavering pulse, who is sure to stand within these walls another Sabbath. Then, my dear friends, if it be true that, when this heart shall give its last beat, and these eyes shall become fixed, the soul, capable of agony, and susceptible of joy, shall only unfurl its long-folded wings, and soar to the judgment-seat, gazing into that eternity which is to be a blank, which I cannot describe, or a blessing, of which language can convey no idea, — is it rea-

sonable, is it consistent with common-sense, that we should leave such a question for one single hour unsettled and undetermined? I fear that, when one makes such an appeal to a congregation, they treat it as men treat a heavy burden; when a great many shoulders bear up a load, each one feels it very light; and I fear, when I ask you so solemn a question, it is, as it were, spread over so many hearts, that each one feels very little of it; but just suppose that you and I were alone, — nay, rather, that God and you were alone, the only beings in the whole universe, and in that clearest light, and in that secret, solemn sequestration, ask yourself, Is my soul safe? am I still a sinner by nature, or am I a saint by grace? All else will little interest you in comparison with this; all disputes will dwindle into insignificance beside this; it will make great things appear of little worth, and great men look very small indeed.

Let me ask, then, are you faithful even where Satan's seat is? Do not attempt excuses. Do not say, I am so involved in business,—I am so tired,—so troubled,—so vexed,—there is so much to irritate and annoy me,—that surely God will make allowance for me. Do not say, I am placed in such a high position,—I am a prime minister, or a member of Parliament, or I am a great general, and what will such a great man say if I were to be a Christian? or what would such another great man say if I were to become a saint? or what would such another one say if I were to preside at a Bible Society or a Ragged School? My dear friends, it is a light thing to be judged of man; but He that judgeth us is God. Do not think that your circumstances, while they provoke Christ's sympathy, will excuse your unfaithfulness. For does not Christ himself say, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" He does not say, Because you have riches I will deal more tenderly with you; but he tells you that riches are a snare to their possessor, and therefore you must be on the watch against delusion and misconception. There was Antipas, "a faithful martyr, where Satan's seat was." Antipas was in trying circumstances; but he preferred to die rather than to compromise the truth, — to meet death in its most formidable shape rather than to conceal his love to his Saviour, to be ashamed of the sure Gospel of the blessed God.

Suffer me, in conclusion, to say, that wherever God's truth is faithfully proclaimed, and fully exhibited in the life, there opposition will be provoked. You may judge of the purity of your creed, and of the faithfulness with which that creed is embodied in your life, by the opposition that you meet with. I do not say that in these days we shall be burned at the stake; but this I do say, that wherever you are faithful, uncompromising, consistent, you may expect opposition: there are martyrs in drawing-rooms, martyrs in palaces, martyrs in garrets; martyrs for whom the trumpet of fame does not sound, and whom the records of martyrology do not mention, but who suffer and sacrifice, and live and die for Christ's sake. My dear friends, it is easy to *die* like a martyr; the great thing is to *live* like a martyr. To die a religious death is not so difficult a thing as to live a religious life: this is the duty that devolves upon you; and by God's grace I hope that we shall be able to live such a life; and then, whether we live or die, it will be well with us.

LECTURE XV.

UNFAITHFULNESS.

“But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them which hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.”—REV. ii. 14, 15.

LAST Lord's-day evening, I addressed you from the previous verse. I explained the meaning of the excellency here predicated of the Church of Pergamos, that “she held fast Christ's name.” I also explained the peculiar circumstances under which she held it fast, in a place where Satan's supremacy was almost undisputed, and under circumstances when martyrdom was the penalty for faithfulness to God. I may here briefly allude to the individual who is here canonized by God, namely, Antipas, pronounced “my faithful martyr,” slain among you for his testimony to the truth. We know nothing of Antipas beyond what is stated here. But this is not a little remarkable, that the Church of Rome, which has canonized such an idolator as Bonaventura, so fierce a persecutor as Hildebrand, so great a fanatic as Ignatius, has never dreamed of recording in her calendar the name of one whom God has pronounced to be his own faithful martyr. It does seem strange that a body which has literally ransacked Pandemonium for saints wherewith to people Paradise, should have omitted to recognise one who has received no eulogia from Popes, but who has the commendation of Him “to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid.” We know this, however, respecting Antipas, that the surrender of the truth, or the sacrifice of life, were the terrible alternatives that were placed before him. It appears that he chose to die a martyr, rather than to live a traitor. He felt the truth to be so precious, that he sacri-

ficed his life in order to retain it. Do you think that Antipas now repents of his choice? He was pronounced a bigot by some of his contemporaries, I doubt not; he was denounced by others as adhering to obsolete prejudices; he was advised by others to give way a little, and be moderate in his attachment to his creed: he now finds that what they called concession would have been compromise; that what they recommended as prudence, in order to save his life, would have been dishonour to his Lord, and treachery to the cause which was committed to him. Is it, I wonder, that there are fewer martyrs because the world has become better, or is it because the Church has grown worse? It is a very solemn question: perhaps we are indebted to the privileges we enjoy as Britons for the immunities which we have as Christians; but it is a great law, that the world is ever at enmity to Christ's Church; that enmity has not ceased,—it varies its form, it develops itself according to the circumstances of the age in which the Church exists. Sometimes it shows itself in nourishing the wild beasts to devour the faithful, or in supplying the fagots with which to burn them; at other times it shows itself in the contemptuous sneer, or the satirical remark, or the paltry gibe, or the contemptible joke. It is still the epitome of the world's history, "Cain slew his brother Abel." It is no less the characteristic of the Church's origin and history, Christ died for his brother man. The manner varies, but the opposition of the world to Christianity remains the same. Nevertheless, wherever there has been martyrdom, it is not truth that has suffered, but the persecutors of the truth. The martyrs ever have been the seedsmen of Christianity; they have scattered the living and incorruptible seed broadcast over many an acre of the earth, and it has grown up into a glorious harvest, which the Lord of the harvest has carried home into his own garner. This lesson we learn from the past, that all the inquisitors of Rome, and all the persecutors of heathendom, have failed to burn out Christianity; while all the architects of every age have failed successfully to build up a lie. Let us have confidence in truth; it will triumph; let us look down with calm indifference on the persecutions of the world; we know that they will fail.

I now turn to the censure pronounced upon this Church. We

have spoken of the encomium, "holding fast Christ's name;" and also, "not denying the faith;" and also, suffering death rather than surrender the truth. Let me notice the censure pronounced upon it, "But I have a few things against thee;" a charge stronger than that used in a previous epistle, "I have somewhat against thee;" and the first thing against her is, "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel." We do not understand by this that the Church, as a whole, had embraced the doctrine of Balaam, but that she suffered in the midst of her the presence of parties who held and inculcated the doctrine of Balaam. Who Balaam was, and what was the character of the doctrine which he taught, and which his followers inculcated on this occasion, we find by referring to his history, as given in Numbers xxi. xxii. and xxiii., which you may read at your leisure. It appears that he was brought from Midian by Balak, king of Moab; in fact, he himself states, "Balak brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east." He is called expressly a prophet; and it does seem, from many of the expressions used concerning him, that he was a true prophet, that he knew the truth, and that he uttered predictions which were eventually performed as they were meant to be: he says himself, "As the Lord shall speak to me;" he says again, "I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord;" he goes, again, "to consult the Lord" (Jehovah); language which indicates deference to the true God; and some of the predictions which he uttered having been since fulfilled, indicate prophetic inspiration from the Fountain of inspiration. But, you ask, is not this strange, that one so wicked should have been inspired by God? It may be strange; but the question is, Is it true? Did not God show unto Pharaoh things that He would do? Will not many stand at the judgment-seat of Christ and be able to say, "Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have done many marvellous works?" and yet will not the Lord say to many such, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity; for I never knew you?" Balaam may have been the unconscious instrument through which God predicted truths; he may have had no more merit in being the channel of prophecy than a great genius has

in being the composer of illustrious poems or the painter of remarkable pictures. Prophecy is a gift, it is not a grace; and God may, for great purposes, use a bad man to be the vehicle of truth, just as he may, for equally great purposes, permit a bad man to be distinguished for his genius, his talent, his taste, or his eloquence.

We find in reading the history of this man that Balak, the king of Moab, and the king of Midian, saw the advancing victories of the children of Israel, and they began to fear that they also should be cut down and destroyed by the irresistible power of that people, and they resolved to gain the victory at the least expense. Balak, the king of Moab, wished to have a victory over the children of Israel without the waste of money, or the maintenance of an army, or the loss of subjects in the achievement of it; and therefore he sent for this prophet, whose love for gold was probably as proverbial as his prophetic utterance of truth, and desired him to pronounce a curse which should fall like a blight upon the armies of Israel, so that, like the hosts of Sennacherib, they might be smitten down and paralysed in a day. "Come," said the king of Moab, "come, curse me this people." Would you not think it would have been more rational for the king of Moab to have said, "Come and bless *me*, and then I shall not need to fear the children of Israel?" Would it not have been as secure to have sought a richer blessing for Moab, as to have imprecated a deadly curse upon Israel? This is reasonable; but it is not the way of the wicked. A wicked man seeks to construct the fabric of his joy out of the ruins of those that are around him. A bad man never feels secure so long as there is one near him as strong as himself: it is the characteristic of God's people that they seek a blessing for themselves under the overshadowing pinions of which they may have peace: it is the characteristic of the enemies of God that they imprecate a curse on others to make them weaker, not a blessing to make themselves stronger. Balak was emphatically what is called in Scripture "a hireling;" he was ready to pronounce a curse deep and long upon a people who had never injured him, provided only he was paid for it: and when he was asked to come and curse, he rejoiced to do it; not in order that that curse might

he followed by the slaughter of the children of Israel, but that it might be followed by the increase of riches to himself. He cared not that he had to rush against the sword of the Almighty, to brave the threats of heaven, to endure the stings of conscience, and to subdue all the sympathies of humanity which teach us to sympathise with the suffering—he minded not all these, if he only obtained the bribe which had been offered him. How true is it that money is—not, as it is rendered in our translation, “the root of all evil,” but the root, as it stands in the original, of all *the* evils which the apostle has specified! how true, I say, is it, that the love of money is the root of innumerable evils! The secret of the treachery of Judas was the thirty pieces of silver; the source of the falsehood of Ananias and Sapphira was money; the strength of the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees was “devouring widows’ houses”—the love of money; and the Church of Rome has been constructed partly from the love of power, but mainly from the love of money, and any one acquainted with that system must see how true this is. The poor Roman Catholic is taxed when he is born; taxed when he is in his cradle; taxed when he is baptized; taxed when he is confirmed; taxed when he is absolved; taxed when he is on his sick-bed; taxed on his death-bed; taxed in his coffin; taxed in purgatory;—taxed from beginning to end; the love of money is the root of these innumerable evils. Balaam was a prophet ready to curse, provided he received the gold that was promised as his reward. He made the attempt; but, lo, we read in the Book of Numbers, that when he tried to curse, he found that the words which he meant to be a malison were transformed in the utterance by the power of God into a glorious benison: Balak hearing of this, cried out in a rage, “I sent for thee to curse this people, and, lo, thou hast blessed them altogether!” He then sent messengers to offer him greater rewards; but the reply of Balaam was, “Though Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot curse where God has pronounced a blessing.” Then Balak, with that exquisite diplomacy by which the children of this world are characterized, besets Balaam at another side of his character: he had tried his covetousness, he now seeks to reach him through his ambition, and says, “I will exalt thee to great

honour, if thou wilt only curse this people; I will make you a prime minister, or a peer of the realm; there is no honour short of my crown which I will not bestow upon you, if you will only curse me these Hebrews." Stimulated by the promises thus made to him, he erected seven altars upon seven different hills, in order that, standing upon each in succession, he might fulminate more sure and tremendous curses upon the hosts of Israel; he went from mountain to mountain, thinking in his folly that there might be some mountain-top where God was not — that there might be some side of Israel not encircled by the everlasting arms; but he found there was no avenue where a curse might enter amid the ranks of those whose confidence was the God of Israel. He found all his efforts fail, all his curses turned into blessings the moment that he pronounced them. But the devices of the wicked are endless; and Balaam having failed to curse the children of Israel, hit upon a scheme that perfectly succeeded. This scheme was a masterpiece: it is alluded to in chap. xxxi. in very brief but very expressive words. We are told there that "Moses said unto them, Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord." He seduced the children of Israel by presenting to them the beautiful and accomplished daughters of Moab; and the people whom he could not weaken by his curse he was able to triumph over by the power of moral corruption. His every curse was turned into a blessing on a faithful people, but his seduction to sin succeeded to the heart's content of Balak the king of Moab. So it is that the safety of the people is in the people's purity; our countrymen are shielded from every curse that can be fulminated from the seven mountains of Rome if they continue a holy people; but the moment that sin corrupts the hearts of a nation, that moment the curse will light upon their prosperity; when a people lose their piety they lose their immunity: unfaithfulness to God forfeits his blessing. And has it not been so in the history of other lands besides the land of Israel? Antichrist, personated in different forms, from Hildebrand to Pius IX., has tried from every hill of Rome to curse the land in which we live: our monarchs have

been deposed ; their subjects have been released from their allegiance ; its whole population have been denounced as heretics ; but every curse that was fulminated from the Vatican against the land that we love was transformed by the God whom we worship into a glorious and encompassing blessing. But the Pope has tried a new process, and during the last twenty years it has been a successful one. Antichrist saw that he could not curse us, but he has found that he can corrupt us ; and so, during the last few years, upwards of seventy ministers of the Church of England have been tainted by his principles ; nearly one hundred of the leading gentry and aristocracy have followed in their wake, and not a few remain *of* Rome but not yet *in* it, though ready to join its communion when it may be most convenient or expedient for them. So true is it that a curse that is not merited falls scatheless ; — that corruption which is not watched against penetrates and destroys.

We have thus seen, from the history of Balaam, that his doctrine was untrue, and his practice corrupt. Let us now see where lay the blame that attached to the Church of Pergamos. "I have a few things against thee ;" and the first thing mentioned is this : "Thou hast in the midst of thee them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak, king of Moab, to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel." In other words, we are taught here that the ministers and people of the Church of Pergamos ought to have removed, or excommunicated, those who held the doctrine and followed the practices of Balaam. We know by what process they were *not* to remove them ; while it is matter of dispute among Christians by what specific process they ought to have removed them. In the first place, they were not to remove the followers of Balaam, who taught the principles that he preached, by persecution. The prison, the fagot, the inquisition, are not the consecrated weapons of the Church of the Lord. "The weapons of our warfare," we are told, "are not carnal, but mighty through God." It has been adduced, in one of the most conspicuous newspapers of the day, as a charge against one of the most distinguished champions of the Reformation, that he advocated the practice of persecution. Now, is it true that any one section of the great leaders of the Protestant Church have tried to put down

obvious heresy by the exercise of weapons that are interdicted and forbidden in the word of God? Is it true, or is it not, that Calvin was guilty of persecution? Let us not conceal what is true, let us not charge against him what is false. In the charge that has been made in the quarter to which I have alluded, there is much that is positively false, much that is grotesque; and much also that is too correct. Let us see, then, how far a great founder of the Protestant Church used persecution toward Servetus in order to drive his system out of that Church; and how far he shrank from and abhorred it. In the statement in the public paper to which I have referred, in which Calvin is charged with burning Servetus, it is conveniently concealed that all the Fathers, without exception, taught and encouraged the practice of burning heretics, in order to purify the Church and save their souls. It is also conveniently concealed, that the Church of Rome had sanctioned persecution for a thousand years, and that Calvin had learned to persecute as a duty, from the school in which he had been brought up and had learned the first elements of Christianity. And in the third place, it is also quietly concealed that Servetus, who was not only a Pantheist, but also an open blasphemer, was apprehended as a heretic, and thrown into prison by the Church of Rome, at Vienne, and had escaped from his dungeon and from burning by stealth; so that Calvin, if he was at all guilty, only did what the Church of Rome regretted that she had not the power to do several months before. Now, all these facts, which are modifying elements, are unfairly concealed. But what portion of the alleged guilt does actually belong to Calvin? He says, "These things done by the senate were done by my influence and advice." "Servetus, by my influence and advice, was committed to the prison by the civil power." "Having received the freedom of the city of Geneva," continues Calvin, "I was bound to impeach him as guilty of this crime; but from the time that the articles were produced against him I never uttered a syllable concerning his punishment." Nay, it is actually the fact, that Calvin deprecated the burning of Servetus. Calvin believed, I regret to say, what every reformer then believed, that to imprison, and punish by death, those who were heretics, was a Christian principle. Cranmer, for instance, sanc-

tioned the burning of two Anabaptists ; John Knox, as is known to every one, held the doctrine that idolaters (and he ranks Romish priests as idolaters) ought to be put to death ; and, no doubt, Calvin also was tainted by the same doctrine. But the school in which they learned to persecute was the Church which now denounces the Reformers, as if they were the originators of persecution. In the next place, let me ask, is it fair to try the sixteenth century by the light of the nineteenth ? Would it not be more kind to dwell upon the glorious deeds and ennobling graces and pure evangelical principles of the pious dead, rather than to rake up their sins, their shortcomings, their infirmities, and glory in exposing them ? And lastly, let it be remembered, that if Calvin, and Cranmer, and Knox sanctioned persecution *then*, their descendants of every section of the Protestant Church now repudiate it ; while the Church of Rome, in which they learned persecution, still cleaves to its ancient persecuting principles, and is prepared to gather the fagots, and to bolt the prison-doors, and to celebrate the *auto-da-fés*, as soon as opportunity and power put it within her reach. I have this much to say in defence of Calvin ; I have nothing to say in mitigation of the crime of those who hold persecution as a principle still, and are prepared evermore to practise it. I fear Calvin's accusers hate his noble theology, and therefore denounce its author.

Thus, then, we believe that, to remove the Balaamites, and those who held their principles, by burning, or imprisoning, or beheading them, would have been unscriptural and sinful. If the fires of persecution are again to be lighted, we repeat it, let them be lighted by the foes, not by the friends, of the Gospel. If the sword of the persecutor is to be unsheathed, let the hand of an enemy, not the hand of a Christian, unsheath it. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal ;" and *because* they are not carnal, they are "mighty." But whilst we are not to persecute those who hold erroneous sentiments, it is, notwithstanding, the duty of the Church not to retain them in her communion. The sin of this Church consisted in not protesting against them,—in not ecclesiastically, or congregationally, or according to the form of polity by which the Church was characterized, separating from them, or separating them from herself. But here lies an impor-

tant distinction worthy of our recollection ; we may not separate from our communion those who differ from us in details, while we ought to keep from a communion-table those who differ from us in vital and essential truths. We have this very beautifully brought out by the Apostle, when he tells us, in Romans xiv. 2, 3, "One believeth that he may eat all things : another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not ; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth ;" and again, in verse 5, "One man esteemeth one day above another ; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Where there is a difference in ceremony, or in details, there it is right to retain those that agree with us in essentials ; but when the difference is in vital truth, or practical morality, then it is duty to separate them from us, or for us to separate from them. Those, therefore, who are true Christians, who hold the great essential doctrines of the everlasting Gospel, justification through the blood of Christ, and sanctification through the Spirit of Christ, may differ from us about the forms of worship, — they may differ about the time and ceremonies of baptism, or about the mode of administering the Lord's Supper. In such details let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind ; but where the difference is, whether Christ be God or not, then concession would be compromise, and countenance of the error would be unfaithfulness to Christ. Let us join with all that love the Lord Jesus Christ heartily and truly ; but let us separate from them, or let them separate from us, who deny and repudiate the great truths, without which the Gospel is a collection of dreary theories, not a glorious compendium of light, and life, and truth.

But we have another class of heretics referred to in this epistle — the Nicolaitanes : "Thou hast also them which hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." We know little about this sect ; the Balaamites seem to have been more characterized by practical ungodliness : the word used in verse 14 is generally used in Scripture to denote idolatry ; and idolatry was probably the characteristic sin of the sect here alluded to, as "they who held the doctrine of Balaam." Wherever there is an immoral liver, there is always an idol worship ; whenever a man

strikes out a new directory by which he is to live, he is sure to strike out a new god whom he is to worship. Man's heart has much to do with man's head. What he wants to be true, has a great deal to do with what he concludes to be true. But the sin of the Nicolaitanes seems to have lain not so much in their conduct as in their doctrine. "Thou hast also them which hold the *doctrine* of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." I have endeavoured to ascertain who the Nicolaitanes were; and I find they belonged to the class called Gnostics—a name which is derived from the Greek word *γινώσκω*, which means, to know; so called because these parties pretended to have a monopoly of all the spiritual knowledge of the age in which they lived. They believed, among other peculiar and erroneous notions, that matter was essentially evil; that the resurrection of the body was a thing that never could be; that our Lord was never actually incarnate, but that he took a kind of phantom appearance of a body; that he seemed to be born, to be crucified, and to rise again, but that he was only so in pretence, and not in reality and truth. These were some of the principal tenets of the Nicolaitanes.

Our Lord says, "Thou hast them which hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, *which thing I hate.*" This teaches us, that false doctrine is not a light thing. Many will tell you,

"For modes of faith let senseless zealots fight;
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right:"

forgetting that the idea is absurd. Wherever there is doctrinal error in the head, there will be generally practical corruption in the life. To be sound in doctrine is not second, but rather superior, to being correct in conduct and practice. The man who has a creed without truth, will generally be found to have a life without consistency and holiness. It is a great fact, that "as a man thinks, so is he." But there is a distinction here made, as you will perceive, between the principles and the persons of the Nicolaitanes. This teaches us always to distinguish between the minister and the error that he holds. Hate the doctrine that is corrupt, but love and pray for the men that are the subjects of it. It is possible so to hate the doctrine, that you will do every thing to destroy it, but so to love the men who are the subjects of that

doctrine, that you will do everything to emancipate and deliver them. Our hatred to the error may be just in the ratio of our love to the man. We may have the greatest love to the Nicolaitanes, and the greatest antipathy to the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes. Hence, when I speak strongly of the errors of Socinians, do not run away with the conclusion, that I hate Socinians. Or if I speak strongly of the errors of the Church of Rome, do not say I hate Roman Catholics. I denounce the error, because I love the subjects of it; I detest the crime,—I pity and pray for the criminal. And surely, if a man holds a wrong doctrine, and a doctrine that is leading him to the depths of ruin, instead of directing his path to the Lamb, what man is so much to be pitied? Of all misfortunes, the greatest, surely, is losing the way that leads to heaven; and instead of being angry with a man who has lost the way to happiness, our duty is to pity him, to pray for him, to show him how I hate his error, but how I love himself, by trying to undeceive him in the one way, and to bless him and to do him good in the other. If a man is seen drinking poison without being conscious of it, you cannot tell him too strongly of his danger; if a blind man is walking into a precipice, you cannot pull him back too instantly. If a man holds doctrines that destroy his soul, you cannot point out his error too powerfully or too clearly; and if you fail to warn him, you show both hatred to the man, and unfaithfulness to duty.

We may gather, too, another lesson from this passage: that it is not sinful to call a sect after the name of its founder. Some persons have said the name of Puseyite, bestowed upon those who hold the livings of the Protestant Church, but who maintain all the doctrines of the Church of Rome, is uncharitable. I think we are warranted in bestowing it; our Lord says, that those who held the doctrines of Nicolas were Nicolaitanes. Thus, too, we are quite justified, I think, in calling those Socinians who hold the doctrine of Socinus. But let us do so merely for distinction's sake, not in contempt or bitterness, or in an uncharitable spirit.

We learn from this, too, that Churches are dealt with according to their faithfulness. This Church was visited with chastisement because of its unfaithfulness in the pulpit, and its immorality in the pew. Wherever we see a church waning in its character,

failing in its exertion, we may fear that there is some want of faithfulness in those that rule, or some deficiency in those whose duty it is to obey. The Church was called upon to repent; "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth:" *i. e.* retrace the conduct which you have pursued. Begin a new and far more scriptural policy. Remove the error which deforms and defaces your communion; pray for, and pity, and labour to convert those who hold that error. There is repentance which is mere conviction and remorse—that Judas had; there is repentance which is also knowledge of guilt—that also Judas had; there is a repentance which is deep and piercing sorrow—that also Judas had; but there is a repentance which is like the feeling of a child who is conscious of having offended a loving and affectionate father, and which feels this as its greatest grief, "My Father, against *thee*, *thee only*, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." This Church had so sinned, and was called upon, not to put down the Balaamites and the Nicolaitanes by force,—which would have been persecution,—nor to connive at the existence of their errors, which would have been compromise; but to refute those errors by clear argument, and to reform them by love, by prayer, by truth. This command to repent is addressed to all the ministers, rulers, and members of the Church of Pergamos; and this repentance was to be shown by a retractation or reformation of the course which they had pursued. But there may be more in it. It may be that this Church was *morally*, as well as *ecclesiastically*, guilty. Their conduct may have encouraged the Nicolaitanes and prevented their reformation, conviction, and conversion. It may have been loss of temper on the part of the Church; or it may have been calling them by hard names, instead of using strong arguments; or it may have been speaking to them in bitterness, instead of speaking to them in love; and therefore this Church may have been called upon to repent of all this, as well as to reform her doctrines. Kindness is a weapon of the keenest edge. That sort of controversy which consists in calling people hard names, saying bitter things against them, charging them with believing what they repudiate, and ascribing to them motives of which they have no knowledge, is productive of incalculable

mischief. But if controversy be used to dislodge error, by the appliance of truth—if it be speaking the truth in love, and love in truth; hating the error, but praying for the errorist's conversion,—such controversy is that which this Church did not employ, and which she was called upon to repent for not having long ago employed vigorously and zealously against the heretics in the midst of her communion.

We learn next, from the whole of this epistle, that a pure faith is of the greatest importance in a Christian Church, and that to hold false doctrine is the most terrible calamity. To hold a pure faith is a great and unspeakable blessing, as to seek it is a solemn and a sacred duty. But we have no reason for supposing that these Nicolaitanes were not to be blamed, because they conscientiously held their errors. I have no doubt that the Nicolaitanes were perfectly conscientious in holding the doctrines which are here so strongly condemned by our Lord Jesus Christ; but the fact of a man's holding an error conscientiously does not make that error truth; it merely makes the man to be more respected; and teaches us that we are the more tenderly to treat him. Because, for instance, a Socinian is conscientious in his Socinianism, his Socinianism is not on that account less unscriptural; but the person is on that account more to be respected because he is sincere. I respect the man because he is conscientious; I pray for him because his error is a serious and a fatal one; I will try to confute it and lead him to a better conviction because I love him.

Such seem to be the lessons to be gathered from this portion of the address to the Church of Pergamos. The Divine Author declares that “if she does not reform, according to his exhortation, he will come unto her and fight against her with the sword of his mouth;” and although her candlestick might not be removed, as was the case with the Church of Ephesus on account of her entire apostasy from the truth, yet at this moment, according to the testimony of travellers, there are about 15,000 inhabitants in Pergamos, and about 3,000 or 4,000 of these belong to the Greek and Armenian Churches. It is remarkable that the threat addressed to Ephesus was the total removal of her candlestick, and at this moment there is not a Christian in Ephesus.

No such threat was addressed to Smyrna; and therefore Christianity exists in Smyrna in greater power, and is professed by a greater multitude than in any other of the seven Churches. The threat addressed to Pergamos was not the total extinction of her privileges, but "fighting against her with the sword of his mouth." She sinned, and she has suffered; for, though not extinguished, -it is after all but the shadow of a Church that is now left.

Let us learn from all this that we stand by faith; whether as the Church of a country, or the Church within these walls, we live by faith. Our candlestick will be removed, if we are unfaithful to our duties; Christ will fight against us with the sword of his mouth, if we are unthankful for our privileges. May a blessing rest both upon the pulpit and the pew! May there descend upon us a double portion of the Spirit of God, that as we grow in years, and as the night grows less, and the twilight of the approaching day becomes brighter, we may be found "faithful unto death," the heirs of a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

LECTURE XVI.

THE HIDDEN MANNA AND WHITE STONE.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it,"—REV. ii. 17.

WE gather from the histories of the Churches on which I have already commented, this great truth, that Churches may perish because of their unfaithfulness to God, but that individual Christians in the midst of them shall, notwithstanding, be delivered, because of their having overcome the evil one, and having been made more than conquerors through him that loved them. You must have noticed in all the promises given to the Churches in the epistles which I have already analyzed, that there is the supposition that the Church may fall—and, in the case of Ephesus, the certainty that the Church fell completely—but there is also implied the blessed assurance that true Christian individuals in the midst of each shall not fall, because they overcome, and inherit the promises made to them that overcome. It is delightful to see a whole Church increase in beauty, in holiness, in glory; but it is cheering to know that when that Church shall retrograde, there may be in the midst of it, and in spite of it, those who have received the grace, and unfold the character, and are inheritors of the glory of God. So it has been in the case of the great western apostasy; the Church of Rome, as a Church, has become apostate, but in that Church, and in every age and century, and phase of that Church, and in spite of repressive tyranny and cruelty, true Christians have been. There are, at this moment, in the Church of Rome, the people of God. In the harrowing

details of the revelations which have recently been made of the Inquisition at Rome, some of which I may, on a subsequent evening, submit to you as evidence of the fulfilment of prophecy, it is stated that there was found an inscription on the dungeon walls, written by some poor martyr that pined and suffered in the midst of it, to this effect : — “Blessed Jesus, they may separate me from thy Church, but they cannot separate me from Thee.” Here was a saint in the midst of the Inquisition — a martyr, not written in the martyrology of man, but inscribed and canonized in the calendar of God, and whose biography is embodied in the simple, yet sublime prayer, “Blessed Jesus, they may separate me from thy Church, but they cannot separate me from Thee.” He might have added the ground of his faith — “neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature” — he might have said, “nor pope, nor cardinal, nor inquisitor,” — “can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.”

We find again, from the verse which forms the subject of this evening’s analysis, that the promise is made to him that overcometh ;” every true Christian is a soldier, and will be, if not to-day, to-morrow a conqueror. He that is not a soldier is not a Christian ; he that never wars, by the very necessity of his condition, will never overcome. I have already shown where the battle-field is. Sometimes it is the counting-house ; sometimes behind the counter ; sometimes around the domestic hearth ; and always, when real, it rages in that realm in which conflict is ever rife, and in which right is sovereign, the conscience of the individual. In alluding to conscience conflict, I may state, as a great maxim, that in matters of logic, second thoughts are always best ; but in matters of conscience, second thoughts are always wrong. When, in a question of reasoning, you have any doubt, stop, ponder, conclude ; but whenever, in a matter of morals, you have any hesitation, you may be sure that abstinence is the holy, the safe and the happy side.

The promise is, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.” Why is the term “hidden” applied to this manna ? Because it relates to, and is the nutriment of the hidden life. It is said of a believer’s life, “Your life is hid with

Christ in God." The bodily, or animal life, is seen—is the subject of inspection; the intellectual life is the subject of analysis; spiritual life is that secret and mysterious union and communion with the Fountain of life which no eye of man can see, and no analysis of logic can unfold, and which, I may add, no force or stratagem of man can dislocate or destroy. The life of a believer is hidden, because it is sustained from a hidden source. You can see what our animal life is; you can trace it from that constantly working and never wearying mainspring—the heart; but the spiritual life you cannot trace, because it is sustained by the cord—the electric wire that connects you with Christ, and raises your communion to a height to which mortal eye cannot reach, and human wing cannot soar. It is a life, the spring, the origin, and the supply of which you cannot see; it is, therefore, a life which is "hidden" to the world—the world can neither understand its principles, nor its operation, nor its love of holiness for holiness' sake, nor its constant living and acting as seeing him who is invisible. It is "hidden" to the world, because it is so opposed to the likes and sympathies of the world. The life of this world courts power and applause; it arrays itself in purple and fine linen; it loves to be called Rabbi, and to pray in the market-place; it sounds a trumpet wherever it goes, and delights to be seen and spoken of by men. This is this world's life, and it has its reward; but the "hidden" life, the true life, the life of the child of God, is hidden from the world, because it is, like its source, unseen and unknown to the world. "The king's daughter," we are told, "is glorious within;" and, therefore, when this hidden life prays, it enters into the closet, and shuts the door; it comes not with observation; there is no procession of splendor, of pomp, and of power before it; it is not clothed with purple and fine linen; it is often found in cellars, in garrets, in sequestered nooks, and in desert places: the outward life dies; the inward life is renewed day by day.

Such then is the "hidden" life, of which the "manna" here spoken of is the nutriment. But believers themselves are also spoken of as "hidden." A beautiful epithet occurs in Psalm lxxxiii. 3, "thy hidden ones," and the same apostle who wrote the Apocalypse, speaking of the Christian's "hidden" character,

says, "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And therefore this word "hidden" is applied to show that the world cannot see and appreciate the subjects of this life.

But more than this: the word "hidden," as used in Scripture, denotes also "safe." For instance, the man who has found the treasure, "goeth and *hideth* it:" hideth it, for what? Because it is precious, and in order to conceal it from the eye of the thief and the robber. Again it is written, "In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me." And again, "In time of trouble the Lord shall hide thee in his pavilion;" and we are told that the believer is safe, because God is "his refuge and his hiding-place."

But while this is one meaning of the word "hidden," its primary meaning is unquestionably "concealed" or "obscured;" and denotes that believers are concealed from the world; they are not known, or observed, or noticed by the world; sometimes they are hidden by their circumstances, and sometimes, even, by their own infirmities. Very often you see a very rugged temper embosoming the jewel of a truly holy heart. None but a true Christian can penetrate this rough outward covering, and behold the rich gem within. You are not, therefore, to say that a man is not a Christian because he has not your pliancy of nature and sweetness of temper. There may be more Christianity in that hot-tempered, rough-spoken man, than there is in that sweet, bland, courteous worldling, who, with an external the most amiable and inviting, has a heart within him replete with all that is evil.

It is thus, then, that a believer is sometimes "hidden" by his own infirmities: and, in such a case, it is specially true, it needs grace to see grace.

A believer may also be "hidden" by the place in which he is. If a true Christian sits upon a throne, or wears a coronet, all around may see it and will feel it. Wherever there is Christian grace, its expression will be seen in Christian beneficence. But are there not true Christians in cottages and in lonely

places? The Christianity of a rich man all will be able to see by its outward expression. But the Christianity of a poor man cannot so easily be seen; it is "hidden," because it has not the means of outwardly expressing itself.

Real Christians may be "hidden" by persecution. The poor Christian, whose inscription I have mentioned on the walls of the Inquisition at Rome, was a Christian hidden from the world by persecution, and not only a Christian, but a martyr for the name of Jesus. We all think, when we are placed in some obscure position, that we can do no good; but we are, in this supposition, very much mistaken. We say, if we were only placed at such a height, we should so shine that we should make the whole world Christian. We are deceived—we misapprehend; we may depend upon it, that every man is at this moment placed in that position in which he may, if he will, do the greatest good. It matters not what our place may be, or what its requirements may be, you are there just because you are wanted there. That poor man to whom I have before alluded, who was cast into the Inquisition, thrown down the horrible deep funnel by his persecutors, and his bones burned to cinders, no doubt thought, while he was expecting his death, that he could be of no use to any in the world or the Church. He doubted, martyr though he was. The year 1849 comes; the Inquisition is laid bare, and that poor man becomes a preacher of the gospel by the dim inscription upon the walls of his dungeon, "O Christ, they may separate me from thy Church, but they cannot separate me from Thee." "He being dead yet speaketh."

Having noticed the Christian's "hidden life," let me also notice the Christian's hidden food. We know the fact but not the mystery of a Christian's hidden life; let us now look at the fact, and unravel, if possible, the secret of a Christian's nutriment—"hidden manna." We have an allusion to it by our Lord when he says, "I am the bread of life that cometh down from heaven. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead; but whoso eateth of this bread shall live for ever; and I will raise him up at the last day." And again He says, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye have no life in you." And again we are told, "They said therefore unto him,

What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Such is the description of this bread. There is a full description of the typical bread, which you may read at your leisure, in Exodus xvi., wherein we read the history and the descent of the manna in the wilderness, with the main historical details of which I am sure you are all acquainted. Now just as truly, my dear friends, as your bodies cannot subsist without material bread, so surely your souls cannot live without the living manna, that is the food suitable to them. If men really felt this, the Bible would be searched for "daily bread" — the sanctuary would be ever crowded, and the prayer would rise with greater earnestness from greater numbers of hungry hearts, "Lord, evermore give us this bread."

The first feature in the manna that was eaten in the wilderness was this: it fell from heaven. It was not like a flower that bloomed on the soil, but it fell perfect at once, and fully adapted to the necessities of man, direct from the skies. So "the living bread" cometh down from heaven: so Christ is not the invention of a human genius, or the conception of a human philosophy, or the growth of a human root, but the gift of God that came upon us as undeservedly as the manna fell from heaven upon the children of Israel.

I do not know whether anything of the nature of manna now exists: some say that it does; others affirm that it does not. I am rather inclined to the latter opinion. What is the meaning of the name "manna?" The Israelites, when they saw this substance falling from the skies, and covering the earth like snow-flakes, exclaimed, מַן הוּא Man-hu, words which signify "What is it?" Our translators, however, have left the words untranslated,

and hence it has always been known by the name manna, or "what is it?" as if its mystery were meet symbol in name of the "hidden manna." No doubt the Israelites were surprised at the phenomenon, and some of them smiled at the absurdity of expecting nourishment from so strange a source. When Christ, the true manna, came, there was no beauty in him that we should desire him, and the exclamation, partly in sarcasm and partly in wonder, was, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." The last conclusion that a man comes to is, that he must be saved by Christ, and by Christ alone. We ever think that a little of our own righteousness must be added to make the scale turn; a little of our own tears must be added to the blood that he shed in order to make it adequately efficacious. The conclusion which it needs the Spirit of God to teach is, that we are justified, not by anything that we are, nor by anything we have done, nor anything we have suffered, but wholly, solely, completely, by the finished righteousness of him who was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God by him.

Another peculiar feature in the manna which fell from heaven was, that it was for all classes. There was but one source and one kind of food for every one. The Levite, the priest, and the people, all shared the same food. The rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, equally partook of it; and it was equally accessible to all. The rich Jew was no nearer the manna than the poor Jew; the learned Jew had no further to go than the ignorant Jew; it fell among their tents, it lay at their very thresholds. Is it not yet better with that living bread? We have not to say, "Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring Christ down from on high?" or, "Who shall descend into hell, to bring Christ up from beneath?" The word that we preach sounds in your ears, and that sound is the echo of him who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; I am the living bread that cometh down from heaven." This, therefore, is the solemn position in which every man in this assembly at this moment stands—that if he perishes, he perishes with Christ the living bread at his very doors. No man in this audience need perish; there is no irreversible decree that will sink you into ruin in spite of your own wish. If you perish, you perish purely as suicides; you sink

in the waters with an ark beside you into which you will not enter. No words of mine can justly paint the sin of those who hear the gospel and yet perish by rejecting it,—a sin in depth and in heinousness far greater than the profanity and crimes of those who never heard the glad sound.

This wilderness-manna was suited to every taste. We know that it is matter of fact that what is food to one man is poison to another. Further, our tastes are so different, that what one likes, another exceedingly dislikes; and what is luxury to one, is an offence to another; and what one man can live upon, another cannot take at all. So it has been, and will be, with any ordinary food; but this provision was so admirably adapted to its purpose, that every man who tasted it, whatever was his peculiar taste, felt it to be delightful; and the nourishment of it to be the same. Thus it is with Christ, the living bread: you may not like the sermon that preaches Christ; but a Christian will like the subject of the sermon, if it be Christ. You may not admire the basket that carries the bread; but you will bear with the basket that is placed before you, for the sake of the bread which it contains. You may not like the vessel that contains the water, but you will love the living water itself; you will rather have the living water and the living manna from the humblest vessel, than a substitute for it from the best and most precious vessel in the world. One of the evidences that you are a true Christian is, that you can enjoy the plainest sermon that contains plain, living, instructive, scriptural truths. And one of the evidences of a vitiated taste is, when you like the corn-field for its poppies, not for its corn; when you like the sermon for its tinted flowers, and its admirable similes, and its classic allusions, not for the sake of the saving truths which that sermon preaches to you. The Apostle says, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." We are also told that "Except we be made as little children, we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God." A babe will take nothing but the pure milk; and were you to put into its milk the richest and the sweetest things, that babe would not take it; it likes what God has provided; nothing less will do, nothing more is needed. So it is with the child of God; he will drink the pure milk of the word;

he will eat the simple manna, and live upon it; he will receive it and enjoy it, though the sermon be not so eloquent as his taste might like, or so exciting as his fancy might prefer, or so logical as his judgment might desire; let us be thankful for living bread; and if we cannot have that living bread served in the best basket, let us be content that we have it at all. If there are two ministers who both preach the same gospel, and one preaches it in a way that commends itself to your heart, your mind, and conscience; and the other does not preach it so clearly, so distinctly, so eloquently, and with so great profit; then I say, welcome and accept the one that suits you. God has so arranged the ministry that there is no one taste which may not be satisfied: it is a beautiful provision, that God has raised up ministers of every variety of style, of manner, and of taste. There may be two hundred ministers of the gospel in London, every one of whom preaches in a different style from the rest; and so you find that you can receive profit from one, when you cannot receive the same amount of profit from another. Choose what basket you like, but take care that it contains that living manna which alone can nourish the soul.

In the next place, it is not enough to hear the manna described, it is not enough to see it, you must also eat it for yourselves. If the Israelite of old had looked from his tent, and been pleased with the beautiful white covering that clothed the desert, and then retired to his tent again, he would have perished with hunger: or if some of the chemists of that day had taken it, and analyzed it, and forgotten to eat it, they too would have perished with hunger. So it is with us; it is possible to form the most exquisite harmony of the gospel, to be perfect critics and admirable theologians, to be constantly handling the basket that contains the manna, and yet not to have eaten of the living manna that nourishes the immortal soul. Ministers may preach, and yet not profit; they may distribute the manna, and yet not eat of it themselves: every minister of the gospel knows the great temptation that besets him; namely, to read the Bible as if he were in the pulpit, instead of reading it as having entered into the closet and shut the door; to open the Bible and begin to ask, first, How shall I explain this to my people so as to reach their

consciences most directly? instead of asking first, How shall I feed myself with living manna that I may grow thereby? May I shut out the minister when I enter the closet. We must stand before God, we must answer before God, as individuals alone. Let us so live, so pray, so read, so teach, and then we shall so die.

I notice another feature of this manna; it was gathered daily: we are told that the children of Israel were obliged to go out *every morning* to gather it, and if any tried to gather one day sufficient to last him both that day and the next day too, he found that the bread which was food on the one day, engendered corruption on the next; God having so arranged it that each one should have enough for himself, but none should have anything to spare for another. It was so with the five wise and the five foolish virgins. Each wise virgin had taken oil enough for her own lamp, but she had nothing to spare for another. But you say, "Is not this destroying the missionary idea that you so frequently inculcate?" By no means; for that missionary spirit consists, not in giving grace to others, but in telling others where grace is to be had. When God gives me justification, I cannot impart that justification to another; when God gives me a new heart, I cannot impart it to my neighbour; when God gives me holiness, I cannot infuse it into another; but I can tell every man, and it is my duty and my privilege to tell every man, where he may go and obtain light, and life, and salvation, and so be made an inheritor of the kingdom of God.

In the next place, you will recollect, that after the manna had ceased, a portion of it was preserved and laid up in a golden vessel, in the Holy of Holies: and so He who says, "I am the living bread," has now entered into the true Holy of Holies, whence he supplies that hidden nutriment to his people which supports their hidden life.

Let us now proceed to examine the second part of the promise here made to him that overcometh; "I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written." You that overcome—who do not act like Balaam who took the wages of unrighteousness—you shall not lose your reward; you shall obtain, what is more precious than earthly and corruptible gold, hidden manna, the nutriment of the hidden life, and of which if you eat, you

shall live for ever. And not only so, but "I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written." Let me very briefly explain this promise. The most ancient manner of recording events was by heaps of stones; in the primitive ages of the world, when any great event took place, it was commemorated by a pile of stones. So in Scotland, before the time of the Druids, we had what are called cairns, which were monuments of this kind. In after ages, a single stone was used, and an inscription engraven upon it. Thus in Deuteronomy xxvii. we read the command given to the Israelites, to take great stones, and plaster them with plaster (to make them white), and engrave upon them all the words of the law. After stones had ceased to be generally used, the bark of some tree was substituted for them, which was afterwards succeeded by the Egyptian "papyrus;" and after this had likewise become obsolete, parchment, or the skin of the sheep or calf, became the usual substance on which events were recorded; and after it, the most perfect of all, paper. These changes may be noticed in the origin of the names by which it was known. Thus *ξύρις* in Greek, means properly "wood:" and because wood was one of the implements anciently used for writing on, "charta," the Latin derivative, means "paper." Again, the word *βίβλος* means, in Greek, a "plant;" but when the leaves of plants were used as materials for writing on, the word *βιβλος* came to signify "a book." Thus, too, the word *λίθος* in Greek, means a "stone," which is derived from the Hebrew word "sepher," (a book,) which also meant originally a "stone;" and from *λίθος* is derived the Greek word, *σοφός*, "wise," which is found in composition in our word "philosopher," a lover of wisdom; because bookmen were, or were supposed to be, wise men. Hence the origin of the expression, "I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written." White stones were also anciently used for another purpose: when a person was to be tried for any offence, the presiding judge delivered to each of the judges, or as we should call them, jurymen, two stones, a white and a black; and after all the evidence had been heard, the jurymen who voted for the acquittal of the prisoner, dropped into the urn, or ballot-box, a white stone; and he who voted for his condemnation, dropped in a black one; and if the majority of the stones were

black, the prisoner was condemned; if white, he was acquitted; the custom, in this respect, corresponding with that of Scotland, where the opinion of the majority of the jury decides the question; a plan which I think superior to the English method, which requires the jury to be unanimous. Now here our Lord says, "I will give you a white stone," not a black one: when you stand at the judgment bar, when the thrones shall be set and the books opened, your name shall be written upon a white stone, you shall not come into condemnation, but I will accept, and justify, and glorify you at that day of trial, and of searching, and of confusion to the guilty.

There is, however, another and a very beautiful explanation given, by some commentators, of this promise; though I do not think it is so correct as that which I have just now offered. In ancient times there were no such things as hotels. Such places are strong evidences of a civilization, which is the result of Christianity. When one travelled, he was therefore obliged to lodge with friends; hence the great value, in those days, of hospitality. But after you had been hospitably entertained by any one, and you had partaken of his salt (as it was called), or eaten of his bread, it was understood that you had made a permanent friendship with him; and it was customary for the host to take a white stone, called a "tessera," which he split into two parts, one of which he gave to his guest, while he himself retained the other. The guest and the host then each wrote their names on their respective halves: and thus a league of hospitality was formed between them; and if, in after life, either of them should be journeying near the abode of the other, and should stand in need of his hospitable entertainment, he was entitled, upon presenting his half of the divided stone, to receive it. It is then as if Christ said, I have given you hidden manna from my hospitable board, I have admitted you to the rights of that glorious hospitality which earth cannot parallel; and I will give you now, as evidence that I have so admitted you, "a white stone with a new name written," which shall be a pledge to you that you walk the earth as my friend, and shall be received into heaven to enjoy the hospitality of that far better and more glorious home, from which you never shall withdraw.

The "new name" may allude to the ancient custom of changing the name of a person who had been raised to a new official rank. Thus the names of the three Hebrew youths in Babylon were changed; thus Joseph's was changed; and we, too, are no more aliens and strangers, but fellow-citizens with saints. This "new name" was on a white stone. Justification carries adoption in its bosom; a change of state is followed by change of character. The justified sinner is not merely an acquitted criminal, tolerated by the new society into which he enters, but a converted son, beloved and welcome.

The world knows not the believer. His whole life and joy are a mystery to the world. Nor does the world approve of him. "Marvel not if the world hate you." "The world knoweth us not." "The carnal mind is enmity." Yet Christ knows us, and will openly receive and bless us.

Are we candidates, my brethren, for these glorious hopes? Do these promises sound in our hearts deep and lasting and full of melody as voices from the better land? Do we pray that the real and enduring blessings which they announce may be our perpetual inheritance? They are the utterance of a Father's voice, significant of the depth and intensity of his love to us, and his desire to have us. They are written by the Spirit of God, the Amanuensis who never errs, in that precious blood which never perishes. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

LECTURE XVII.

CHRISTIAN GRACES.

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write ; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass ; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works ; and the last to be more than the first."—Rev. ii. 18, 19.

THE letter I have read describes the duties, the dangers, the excellences of the Church in Thyatira. The address is introduced by our Lord, in a character suitable to the body of the epistle. He proclaims himself to be the Son of God ; this the epithet he assumes, the Jews construed to be a prerogative of Deity. He thus demonstrates himself to be, what we know he is, the first and the last, the beginning and the end, the Almighty. He next introduces himself under the characteristic attribute of Omniscience, "whose eyes are like a flame of fire." The flame dissolves the diamond into charcoal, subdues the strongest things, penetrates the closest, and finds access where every other element is interdicted. Our Lord has "eyes like a flame of fire," penetrating all things, removing every obstruction, consuming every opposition, and searching the deepest recesses and most hidden corners of the human heart. But not only has he "eyes like a flame of fire," but it is added here, "he had feet like unto fine brass." The oxen which, in ancient times, were used for treading out the corn, had brass-shod hoofs, designed to enable them more effectually to separate the wheat from the chaff. The idea conveyed in this hieroglyphic symbol is, that our Lord has not only an omniscient eye to see all, but also the omnipotent power to distinguish, to divide, to separate all. Christ the Omniscient

One ! what a solemn thought ! In close contact with your heart, the very holiest, or the least so in this assembly, is the omniscient eye of the Son of God ! We call certain thoughts secret thoughts ; we pronounce some feelings to be hidden. They are so, relatively to man ; but not so relatively to the Lord Jesus Christ. Those latent propensities to evil, which the holiest occasionally feel — those folded buds that develop themselves into covetousness, pride, ambition, held in abeyance for a time, ripened by circumstances into terrible maturity — Christ sees in their commencement and in their consummation. Those unholy thoughts that spring from the depths of our hearts, detected by none, Christ's eye clearly and distinctly sees,—those evil habits, the remains of which we yet feel ; for it is the penalty of late conversion that we have to encounter a fiercer struggle with the evil within than those have who are early converted to the Lord. The young who have loved the Saviour, gloried in his cross, and held communion with him from their earliest days, have a less hard battle to fight, because the power and the habit of grace within them are mightier and stronger by time ; but those who have been turned from the evil of their ways late in life, have the remains of past habits, and the obduracy of inveterate feelings to contend with, and are destined therefore to a fiercer and intenser conflict with evil within than those who in their earliest years were brought to love the Lord. It is a strong reason for early piety, that it will always be followed by the greatest happiness here : the field of conflict will be softest : the progress will be easiest. “Remember, therefore, thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come,” which will be increased and aggravated by late conversion, “when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.” Those habits, then, Christ sees ; those schemes of evil which circumstances repress—those sympathies which our condition enables us to conceal — those passions which are not developed, because God's Providence restrains them — Christ sees and registers above. All those crimes committed in secret — those deeds whose brand is “deeds of darkness” — those sins which no tribunal can register, no jury pronounce on, no judge condemn — Christ sees and enters in his records. How dark must this earth appear to the bright, burning, holy eye that rests upon it per-

petually! how sovereign must be that mercy that spares the purest of us all even for a single day!

There are other secret thoughts which man hides from man, but which Christ's omniscient eye penetrates and sees through. Man's power to conceal the evil that is within him is far greater than we suppose. God meant us originally to be the exponents outwardly of what we inwardly are; and hence, in our fallen condition, the blush upon the face, the averted eye, the tremulous hand, are designed to be the exponents of conscious guilt. On the other hand, the serene brow, the bright and forward eye, the firm and unfaltering footstep, are meant to be the characteristics and the indices of conscious innocence; but man so trains the eye, that it looks innocence while evil is behind it; and he so disciplines the muscles of the face, that it seems the picture of all that is beautiful, whilst it is but the blind of all that is bad; and he so invigorates his footsteps with a new and an artificial elasticity, that when it ought to tremble beneath the weight of conscious sin, he walks as if the universe were his home, and the sun and moon and stars looked down only to applaud him. So we may deceive our fellow-man; but the eye of flame sees within, and the foot of brass will separate between the wheat and the chaff. Man may conceal his thoughts from many an eye by the refinement and polish of human society. Christianity tries to eradicate the evil that is within man, but fashionable life has for its great effort to conceal, to cover, and to make it appear the very reverse of what it is. The refinements of life try to hide that which Christianity seeks to extirpate. What is this but elegant hypocrisy? It is covering guilt with smiles, iniquity with circumlocution, and bad morals with fascinating and attractive manners. We are told that hypocrisy is peculiar to the Church:—the Church has no monopoly of it; there is plenty of hypocrisy in the world; wherever there is the most exquisite exterior, finish, and refinement, it is often, (though not always—God forbid that it should be so!) merely the effort to make enmity appear love, to make misery appear happiness, and to make hatred and jealousy and all that is deformed look as if it were affection, and sympathy, and love, and all that is beautiful. And therefore, when you are told that religion makes men hypocrites, you an-

swer that fashion also makes men hypocrites; and it is possible to play the hypocrite at Almaack's, just as it is possible to play the hypocrite at the communion-table, or in the house of God. But whatever be the veil, the eye of flame sees through it; whatever be the exterior covering, the eye of Christ's omniscience penetrates and detects it.

Again; there are hidden and secret sins which are never brought to light, and which are restrained by circumstances, and never can break out; yet are these sins in the sight of the omniscient eye of Christ Jesus. Much of the peace and quiet of the world is the fruit of circumstances, not the fruit of principle. None of us know what we should be were we placed in a different situation; and if we are Christians, just let us feel that the spot in which we now are placed, whatever be its difficulties or its trials, is the very spot where we are called upon to discharge the duty that devolves upon us, and where we are most likely to escape the temptations to which we should otherwise be exposed. Have you then, my dear friends, congratulated yourselves that your sins are secret and hidden from the eye of others? Remember that they are manifest to the omniscient eye of the Lord Jesus Christ. What an awful scene will be displayed at the day of judgment! There is not in this assembly one—not even the purest being present—who could consent that the thoughts of his heart should be laid bare and written in illuminated characters in the presence of this congregation. And yet a day comes when all men's hearts shall be laid open; and you shall, at the judgment-seat, see men's thoughts and men's passions just as clearly as you now see men's deeds, and as distinctly as you hear men's words. What a spectacle will there be! But let us not dwell upon it, for well we may conceive how many, when they anticipate that terrible ordeal, will cry to the mountains that they may cover them, and to the hills that they may conceal them. But, blessed be God, it is not the judgment day yet; this is the day of grace, and there is not a heart, though blackened with the greatest sins, which may not this instant be made white like snow, through the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanseth from all sin.

But having thus noticed these two characteristics, the foot of brass, and the omniscient eye of a holy Saviour, let me notice the

commendation pronounced upon the Church of Thyatira, as that commendation is recorded in ver. 19: "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first." In every Church of the seven you will perceive there is a distinction manifest between the good that are in it and the depraved multitudes in the midst of which these good ones are found. Christ always sees them that are his, whatever be the circumstances in which they are placed. There never has been a phasis of the visible Church so utterly depraved that there are not in the midst of it some that sympathise with Christ, and that sigh and cry because of the abominations around them. We shall find amid the alpine peaks some beautiful snowdrop that the frosts have not nipped; and in the bosom of the avalanche some lovely crocus that the snows have not buried. We shall find amid the bleakest desert, here and there some fair oasis; in the midst of Sodom, a Lot; and in the Church of Rome many of those people of God who are summoned to come out of her lest they partake of her sins, and receive, as the consequence of them, of her plagues.

In the next place, Christ not only distinguishes between them that are his and them that are not; but he also begins by commending the little flock, before he proceeds to condemn the large retinue of visible professors. He pronounces an eulogium on the one before he administers a rebuke to the other. He is anxious that the former should be commended for whatever was good in them, before the others should be warned or punished according to their deserts. He is anxious that those little ones should know that those judgments and troubles that overcome the guilty are only meant in mercy to them; and that the cloud that grows so black, and that rolls onward so rapidly, fraught with judgment to a world that disowns its Lord, is the vehicle of benediction and of mercy to them that acknowledge and love him; and therefore he proceeds to state the course which he has noticed, and which he applauds. "I know thy works;" these works are enumerated in the epistle to the Galatians, where the apostle tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, faith, hope, charity, brotherly kindness." Christ says, "*I know thy works*;" nothing can conceal from him the fruit which his love has ma-

tured, and his smile has made fragrant. Those deeds done in secrecy and silence—those acts performed by the right hand which the left hand does not know—that cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple's Lord—those desires to do good when the hand had nothing to contribute as the expression of the feeling that flowed through and animated and enriched the heart—Christ sees, and notices, and registers; and when you stand before the great white throne, he will say to you, "I was hungry, and ye fed me: naked, and ye clothed me: sick and in prison, and ye visited me; for in that ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." "I know your works, and will reward you."

But not only does he describe her *works* as known to him, but also her *charity*. This word "charity" is unfortunately so translated. It has come, in the modern acceptance to denote "liberality;" but it is the translation of the word ἀγάπη, which means "love;" and Corinthians xiii. contains the best definition of its meaning, where the apostle says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up;"—and so on throughout the whole of that beautiful and eloquent chapter. Love to the Saviour is the essence of Christianity; love is the solvent of all wrongs, the cement of all society; it is the last flower of paradise that has survived the fall, and it is the first flower of paradise regained, planted in the heart as an earnest of its advent; it blooms in many a lonely nook, and beautifies by its presence the heart of many a poor and obscure follower of the Lord. Do you love the Saviour? is only the synonyme for, Are you a Christian? He that has no love to Christ—have what he may besides—is destitute of that which is the very core and substance and essence of the Gospel. If so, it is important to ask, if we love him? and

he that loves the Saviour, he that has that love which Christ says "I know, approve, and take cognisance of," in the first place delights to imitate and follow Christ; he prefers affliction with the people of God to the pleasures of sin that are but for a season. He would rather belong to the little sequestered church or chapel where Christ is preached in all his glory, than be the daily worshipper in a magnificent cathedral, which is the mausoleum in which Christ is buried, not a living temple in which his Name is audibly and musically proclaimed. He who has love to Christ will follow him wherever he goes: the language of his creed will be, "Where thou goest, my Lord, I will go; where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people, however mean, shall be my people, and thy God, my God." If we love the Saviour, the cross of Christ will be dearer to us than the crown of Cæsar; and any suffering will be sweet rather than the sacrifice of what we believe to be his mind and will. The path that we tread, however rough, will feel smooth to him, and a wreath of thorns around his brow will be dearer than the brightest diadem; the commandments of Christ, however many, will not be grievous to him; and the cross of Christ, however heavy, will seem light to him. Love smoothes the way, illuminates the cloud, and kindles in the midst of the darkest night the bright beams that are the dawn of a sun of glory that shall know no setting. To love the Saviour is to love all that the Saviour loves, alike the promise, the precept, the prophecy, the doctrine; all are loved because Christ is the substance of all, and these all bear his name and his imprimatur.

If we love the Lord Jesus Christ, in the next place, we shall sympathise with the cause of Christ, *i. e.* wherever it prospers we shall rejoice: when we hear of its retrogression, if that be possible, we shall mourn. "Mine eyes," says the Psalmist, "run down with tears, because men keep not thy law." "The reproach of them that reproached thee," he says again, "fell on me." Moses was dumb in his own cause, but he was eloquent for the honour of his Lord: and if we love the Saviour, we shall rejoice rather to hear of the ebbs and flows of his glorious kingdom, than of the rise and fall of the mightiest dynasties of Europe; and amid the crash of dissolving thrones, and amid the echoes, wafted by the wind, of broken-up and shattered empires, we

shall hear a sound the most musical of all in a believer's ear: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

If we love the Saviour, we shall often speak of him. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." "Come, all ye that fear God," says the Psalmist, "and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul." The woman of Samaria no sooner knew the Saviour, than she ran and told the townspeople, saying, "Come, see a man that told me all that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" And we are told, too, of God's people, in the last days, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

And let me ask then, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, friends, acquaintances, relatives, Do you ever speak of the Gospel, the claims of the soul, the excellency of the Saviour, the need of salvation, to those with whom you have intercourse? It is impossible that grace should be supreme within you, and yet that your lips should be always dumb upon the subject. I do not say that in giving out your goods you should always enclose a tract. I do not say that in selling things over the counter, you should always quote a text. I do not say that in all places and under all circumstances you should say, "I am a Christian;" but if you are a child of God, or if the love of the Saviour has a place in your heart, and nestles there as something dearest and most beloved, it will give a quiet, subdued, and consistent tone to all you say and think and do, which will constrain the world to say there is an element within you which they do not possess, and show itself in your harmonious and consistent walk. The opportunity may occur in your contact with mankind, with the highest and the lowest, with the richest and the poorest, when a little quiet word may be dropped, which may be the turning point of a soul's salvation; when a thought may be insinuated, which shall be a savour of life unto life; when a memento may be dropped, that shall be a living seed deposited in a prepared heart, and

shall germinate and bring forth, in some thirty, in some sixty, and in some an hundred fold. Too often the congregation in a Church think that the minister is to do all the work as their proxy, and that they have nothing to do but to listen, or to drop a sovereign into the plate when they are called upon by the preacher to aid some Christian work, and that then their missionary responsibility and labour is fulfilled. When you give a sovereign, or ten sovereigns to the missionary cause, that is the least you can do. Each man in his home, in his warehouse, in the world, ought to be a missionary; and if you are Christians, it is impossible that you can hide it; its irrepressible beams will break out at a thousand crevices, even if you try to hide it, if you are the children of God, and if Christ has transformed you into his own glorious and blessed likeness.

If you have this love, you will find it growing every day in depth and in fervour; and this sort is the true progress of a Christian. Progress is an inner work, not an outer one. It is not something put on from without, but it is a vital power that gathers strength and intensity every day, until the tiny spark that trembled on the very verge of extinction grows in lustre and in splendour, and mingles in its full time with the glories of happy and everlasting day.

Let me ask you, do you love Christ? This love may be chiefly a principle in one man, and chiefly a passion in another man: it partakes of the nature of both; and though it be quite true that the feeling of this love may not always be so predominant that you are conscious of it, yet, when the crisis comes when its reality will be tested, it will be shown whether you love Christ or not:—let his Name be dishonoured by the remark of one that is near you, and you will instantly vindicate that Name; let a profane jest be uttered by one into whose society you are introduced, you will kindly and courteously, but faithfully, warn him that he is doing wrong; let dereliction of duty be detected in a brother, and, if you are a Christian, with love to Christ in your heart, and sympathy with Christ in your soul, you will instantly interpose. The present day is not a time in which Christians are called upon to die as martyrs, but it is a day in which Christians are called upon to live as Christians. It requires, I solemnly

believe, more grace to live religiously than it does to die religiously. It requires the greatest grace to enable a man to be bold for Christ when all around are opposed to him; to avow that he is a Christian, when the company in which he is placed make Christianity a joke.

And Christ knows not only his servants' love, but also their "service." This word "service" ought to be translated, "ministry." It denotes that this love in their hearts develops itself in ministry to others. Wherever, then, there is a congregation in the hearts of whose people is love to Christ, that congregation will be characterised by all Christian service. In their neighbourhood you will have a sick-visiting society, and schools for the children of the poor whom their parents cannot educate; and, as I told you in the morning, that husband and wife who have no children of their own have a special call upon them to take the children of the poor and educate them: and if you know that those around you are ignorant of the Gospel, you will send the Scripture Reader and the Tract distributor among them. In fine, whatever be the work that requires to be done for God's glory and for the good of man, that, if there be love to Christ in your hearts, you will rejoice to do. It matters not whether you be a day-labourer or a British peer; it matters not whether you are learned or illiterate; the light of truth that is within you will appear in service without, and men will know, by what you silently do, not by what you loudly utter, the love of Christ that is in your heart, and the attachment to him which is the actuating principle of your lives.

Next, our Lord says that he has noticed the "faith" of this Church: "I know thy love, and thy service, and thy faith." Throughout the Scripture faith is spoken of as the most precious blessing, and as the mother of all the graces of the Christian character. "Faith worketh by love;" "overcometh the world;" "purifieth the heart;" "justified by faith, we have peace with God;" and throughout the Scripture it is constantly spoken of as the peculiar grace which knits the believer to the believer's Lord. Some persons have said that it seems a severe thing, and a thing which they do not like, that one man should be condemned for not believing, and that another man should be saved

for believing. If you consider the true meaning of faith—confidence, you will see that there is no such severity in this at all. Take away confidence from a bank, and that bank will be in fragments to-morrow; take away confidence from the commerce of a land, and it will instantly go to ruin; and if this want of confidence be so destructive in things human, is it unnatural to suppose that want of confidence in God will be utter ruin in things that are eternal? Want of faith, therefore, is want of confidence in God. When Christ says, “I know thy faith,” it is as though he said, “I know that it trusts me in the storm; I know that it leans upon me in difficulty; I know that it sees me in the darkest night, and says, ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.’”

I have given you the characteristics of love: let me quote briefly the principal characteristics of faith. The first characteristic of it is, that faith reveals things unseen. That man who has no faith, who has merely sense to guide him, sees nothing beyond the boundaries of this world; he sees merely money, and rank, and riches, and honour, and power; and these things fill his eye, absorb his affections, occupy all his sympathies; but that man who has faith, sees beyond this world. Faith stretches its pinions and ascends to realms beyond the stars, and brings back the news to this earth,—I have seen the everlasting God, the glorious Saviour, the blessed Comforter and Sanctifier. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;” faith brings near things that are otherwise remote. The believer and the unbeliever look through the same telescope; but they look from the opposite ends of it. The one looks at the right end, and sees distant things near; the other looks at the other end, and sees near things remote. Faith, in a believer, brings all things near to him; God near to him, Jesus near to him, the Holy Spirit near to him, eternity near, the judgment-seat near, heaven near—all that is mighty, precious, eternal, nearer to him—nearer, infinitely, than the neighbor that is next to him, or the circumstances in which he lives. Another feature of faith is, that it not only brings distant things near, but it writes the monosyllable *my* upon the best and brightest things that are beyond the skies. It can

say, "My Lord," "my Saviour," "my God," "my King," "my Shepherd," "my all and in all." And in the next place, faith sees in Jesus greater excellences than in all besides. Moses could say, by faith, "I count the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." You will see this influence of faith in the instance of St. Matthew: Christ found Matthew at the receipt of custom—a most lucrative situation; he said to him, Follow me. Sense answered, What! Matthew, leave five hundred a-year, and follow one who was just telling us, a moment ago, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head? But faith was predominant; and when Christ said "Follow," faith responded, from the depths of his heart, "I will;" and he rose up and followed Jesus. You have another instance of the working of faith in the case of Zacchæus; he came down the moment that Christ called him, and he told Christ, that from that instant he gave half of his goods to feed the poor, and if he had wronged or defrauded any man he would restore him four-fold. Suppose that Zacchæus was worth 500*l.*; he says, I give half to the poor,—that was 250*l.*; and suppose he had defrauded any one of 50*l.*, he restored him four-fold, or 200*l.*: thus, faith immediately gave up 450*l.*, or nine-tenths of his income, at the call of duty: he preferred 50*l.* with Christ to 500*l.* with the world that was opposed to Christ. Again; faith enables the believer to tread down and to triumph over all difficulties. Sense says, "My sins are like a great mountain:" faith says, "But God's mercies are like the great deep." Sense says, "I know not the way to heaven;" but faith reads, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Another very remarkable instance is cited in Hebrews xi.—the case of Noah. God said to Noah, "I am about to destroy the world; now prepare an ark for the saving of thyself and thy household." Had Noah been guided by sense, he would have replied, "O Lord, I am no ship-carpenter; I never built a ship in my life; besides, I was never brought up as a sailor; and I have no compass; my vessel will be wrecked upon the rocks, or it will founder in the storm: if I admit all these animals into the ark, they will devour each other, and devour me in my turn; it is utterly impossible for me, either to make or manage the vessel which Thou hast commanded

me to make. So sense argued : faith, however was triumphant ; and hence the Spirit of God has recorded that "by faith, Noah, warned of God of things not seen, being moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of himself and all his house."

And I know also, it is added, "thy patience." We have much need of patience in our passage through this world. "Bring forth fruit with patience," says the apostle : patient in well doing : "patient waiting for Christ." And the greatest evidence of patience is when you can drink the bitter cup, bow your head beneath the beating storm, lie passive in the hand of Christ, and say quietly and submissively, "Father, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

And then the last good feature of this Church is, that "the last works are more than the first," *i. e.* progress in grace ; the progress of the believer in all the excellences mentioned.

I have endeavoured to give an outline of the good features in this Church. I must reserve the analysis of the type that is here given, namely, the woman Jezebel, the true type of the Romish apostasy, for next Lord's-day evening. In the meantime allow me to notice the peculiar characteristic of this Church, and of every true Church—namely, progress—"the last to be more than the first." Are you, I ask, making progress in Christian character ? are you advancing in faith, in love, in patience, in meekness, in good works, in the service of the Lord ? In order to make progress in the life that must soon die, we must have right food : no man will grow in health and strength without suitable nourishment. It is so in spiritual life : the soul needs to have manna—God's Word, the preaching of his Gospel, the knowledge of a Saviour, to enable him to grow, just as truly as the body needs its nutriment. The body needs pure air to enable it to have health ; the soul needs the same. The moral air of society is tainted, but there are some spots in society whose atmosphere is purer than it is in others. There are some homes whose atmosphere is all corruption ; there are other homes whose roofs are like the wings of the overshadowing cherubim — whose hearts are like holy altars, whose air is purity, whose communion is happiness and loyalty and love. There you can breathe the pure air, and receive the true nutriment.

And in the next place I may notice, that exercise is necessary to the health of the body, and the proper development of its progress. Do you exercise these graces? do you exercise faith, service, patience, love? do you give to the cause of Christ? do you respond to the claims of the Gospel? Likewise, if you are growing in grace, and if your last works are more than your first, you are gathering views of your ownelves more humbling every day. He that learns to-day that he is far more sinful than he believed yesterday, is making progress in the hidden life: he who has, not increasing wickedness, but an increasing sense of his wickedness, is growing in true grace. The apostle Paul, when he began the hidden life, said, "I am not worthy to be called an apostle:" as he grew in the hidden life, he said, "I am the least of all saints;" and when his hidden life had reached its highest perfection, his statement of himself was, "I am the chiefest of sinners."

Let us grow,—let us thus make progress; so that when we come to lie down on the last bed, and to take a retrospect of our past biography, we may have some humble hope, not as a ground of merit, but as an evidence of grace, that our last faith, our last patience, our last love, our last service, our last works, have been greater and better than the first.

LECTURE XVIII.

CONSUMPTION OF BABYLON.

“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.”—**REV. II. 20.**

I EXPLAINED in the course of my reflections on the former part of this passage last Lord's-day evening, that I regarded the name of Jezebel as here employed in its typical and figurative sense ; as, in short, a most expressive exponent or representative of that great ecclesiastical system, the ruin and the doom of which is so graphically delineated in the 18th chapter of Revelation. I cannot at present spare time to enumerate the points of coincidence ; these I must defer, as I am anxious to submit to you what I conceive to be the highest possible presumptive evidence that the commencement of the fulfilment of the 18th chapter of the Apocalypse is now visible. I do not say that all has yet happened which is denounced in that chapter—far from it ; but I believe that what may be called “the rehearsal” of these judgments is already begun. I believe, from the period we occupy in prophecy, and from the points of contact, between the facts and phenomena which are now occurring on the broad face of Europe, from Vienna to Rome, and the striking and vivid apocalyptic predictions which I have read in the 18th chapter, that it is all but impossible to avoid coming to the conclusion, that the knell of the doom of Babylon has sounded at Rome, and vibrates through the air to the utmost circumference of the Papal dominions.

You will recollect, that I have tried to show that there is the strongest evidence, that we are now placed at the commencement

of the outpouring of the seventh vial, and amid the last dregs of the sixth.* You will recollect my showing you, several months ago, that, early in the period comprised under the seventh vial, Great Babylon, (as stated Rev. xvi.) "comes into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." There is given the summary in brief, under the seventh vial, of the facts recorded at length and in detail in chap. xviii., which is the fulfilment of it. First, the air was to be tainted, physically and morally; the proofs of this visitation are too familiar to us all: next, there were to be "voices and thunders and lightnings;" of these I gave you specimens on a previous occasion: there was to be "a great earthquake;" this commenced at Paris, and, melancholy to say, is not likely soon to conclude there. The great city is next to be divided into three parts—that is, Europe divided into three distinct nationalities; or, as a daily newspaper, which does not pretend to be guided by any apocalyptical views, recently stated, "we shall have all Europe by-and-by divided into three great sections." Nationality is the grand rallying cry: "Italy, for the Italians;" "Germany, in all its divisions, for the Germans;" "Hungary, for the Hungarians;" "France, for all the European Latin nations;" and every appearance of this tripartite division of Europe beginning to take place. It is next stated, that a great hail shall come from the north. The Emperor of Russia, probably indicated here, seems as if he felt, if we may judge from his recent words and deeds, that he was called upon to fulfil prophecy, and to be what is here predicted, "the great hail from the north," to scourge the guilty nations of the earth.

Some object to any remarks on these subjects at all. I cannot help it. I must fulfil my mission. Both ministers and people ought to speak out their convictions; and they ought to speak upon points which strike their minds as specially important and most practically useful. Is it not practically important to show that the finger that wrote the predictions in the Apocalypse is busy writing, with no hieroglyphic symbols, the fulfilment of them in broad Europe? If we read God in prophecy, is it not

* See Apocalyptic Sketches, 1st and 2d series.

useful also to read God in history? Again; what the Holy Spirit has described thus minutely and at so great length, it is not for us to assert to be void of practical utility, and productive of no instruction to us. And thirdly, if angels in heaven, and saints before the throne, are called upon to rejoice because Babylon is fallen, is it not a fit subject for our joy too, that so great an obstruction to the spread of the gospel is about to be removed? Ought not Christians to sympathize with the joy of the saints in glory? What excites the joy of heaven should not surely call forth paltry objections and remonstrances on our part.

Now I am about to state facts this evening, and I wish you to keep in mind, that the 18th chapter, which I have read, is the statement of what occurs under the seventh vial. I am able to speak with greater accuracy upon these points, because, during last week, I have been introduced to a highly intelligent lady, who has just escaped from Rome, (having been only ten days out of it,) who has given me a full statement of her personal knowledge of much that has taken place in that city during the last few months. I shall lay before you, this evening, some of the facts which she stated to me, as tending to illustrate the 18th of Revelation, and also those which I have myself collected from the Roman newspapers, the *Contemporaneo* and *Roman Advertiser*, and other authentic sources.

This lady informed me, what I have also heard from other quarters, that upwards of 2,000 Testaments in Italian have recently been distributed among the Roman population. They are at this moment reading these Testaments from house to house; not, I admit, as far as I can learn, to find out the Saviour, but to find out the foundation of that overshadowing hierarchy under which they believe that their liberties and their noblest privileges as men have perished. I pray, what will doubtless follow, that whilst they are anxiously endeavouring to find out the foundations of Antichrist's throne, they may be led to discover, and speedily discover, the glories and the attractions of the Redeemer's cross. Among the earliest discoveries which the Romans have made in the New Testament, there are one or two which have especially delighted me. You are aware that nine out of ten of these Romans never saw a New Testament at all. Mr. Seymour, in his

admirable account of a visit to Rome, says that he called at every bookseller's in Rome, &c. in search of a Bible in the language of the country, and failed to find one.

These defrauded Italians have at length got the Bible—the Bible in their own tongue—for the first time; and in it they have discovered much that has delighted and electrified them. Austrians, I need scarcely tell you, are thundering at the walls of the chief cities in the states of the Church, in order to restore and reinstate the Pope; French shot and shells are piercing the roofs of the noblest churches, and the most beautiful monuments of architectural grandeur in the midst of Rome.* The Romans naturally regard their assailants as the friends, emissaries, and auxiliaries of the Pope, anxious to carry back upon their bayonets him whom the people have dismissed in the exercise of a just and righteous indignation. In searching the New Testament the Romans have discovered this text:—"My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight for me;" "but," they say, "the Pope's servants are fighting for him—bayonets bristle around the walls, and the roar of the cannon is reverberating in their streets, in order to bring the Pope back;" and they argue, logically enough, "Can his kingdom be Christ's kingdom? Can this be the Vicar of Christ, who employs weapons so incompatible with the mind, and so contrary to the express declaration of Christ?" This one text has fallen like a thunderbolt in the midst of them, deepening and strengthening the conviction, which I am told is gaining ground every day in the hearts of 170,000 souls, that the Pope is Antichrist, and not to be accepted as the representative and the Vicar of Christ; and so universal is the opposition to the return of Antichrist, that even females are arming themselves with muskets, and ladies of rank are selling their jewels, their golden trinkets, and their most valuable ornaments, and turning them into money, to furnish powder and ammunition for the Romans to defend their city against the besieging army. I was told by this lady, that such was the enthusiasm of the inhabitants, that the moment they were told that a breach was made by the French, and heard the bell of St. Angelo rung,

* This Lecture was delivered, I need scarcely add, while Rome was besieged by Oudinot and the French.

though this was done prematurely, in half an hour every window in Rome was illuminated, and the people ready to be buried in the ruins rather than to surrender the town to the army of the so-called Vicar of Christ.

Another and a very remarkable text which the Romans have discovered, and which has made a very deep impression on them, is contained in John x. 11; where Christ says, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep." With consummate ingenuity and sound critical acumen they have drawn the conclusion, if the Pope were the true shepherd he would have stayed by his sheep; but without their compelling him, but simply asking him to discharge duties he had neglected, he fled from the fold, and disappeared in the most humiliating disguise; and instead of feeding the sheep with good food, he is fulminating bulls and anathemas against them from Gaëta, where he is in exile. I am told also, that the Romans have written to the Pope, and informed him that if he will come back and continue a Christian bishop in the midst of them, and do the duty of a Christian pastor, they have not the least objection to receive him. I do not say the Romans are Protestants because they read the New Testament and quote these texts. These are but the chinks and crevices through which the light is streaming in; it is but the commencement of reformation. Thus Martin Luther began his labours, believing the Pope to be the true representative of Christ; his eyes were not opened to his apostate and antichristian character, until after he had awakened the Reformation, and commenced that mighty movement which was destined to overspread the whole earth. The Romans, then, have written to the Pope, telling him, that if he will come back as a simple Christian pastor, they have not the slightest objection to his return; and they have added this striking postscript, the most eloquent part of their epistle,—that if the Pope does not come back as they have invited him, and that right speedily, the whole population of Rome will become Protestants. This is what the people themselves say. It is very remarkable, too, that the Jews, actuated, it may be, by mercenary motives, but believing, as they universally do, that the great obstruction to their restora-

tion to their own land is, the antichristian domination of Rome, are selling New Testaments in the streets, and pointing out to the people, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, and showing them the complete identity between the picture there given of antichrist and the features and deportment of Pius IX., who has for the last two years presided over them. I mentioned, on a previous occasion, what seems to be a foreshadowing of the great result which is to follow after the destruction of Babylon, namely, that a great multitude is heard, like the voice of many thunders, saying, "Hallelujah;" this being the first Hebrew word which occurs in the songs of the redeemed; from which Mr. Elliot and many others have inferred that this signifies, that the restored Jews are to take their part in that glorious choir, composed of Jew and Gentile, which begins the new song when Babylon is fallen. And may it not be, that the poor Jew in his ignorance, pointing out to the Roman, in equal ignorance, the points of identity between the antichrist portrayed in the Scripture, and the antichrist who has so long ruled at Rome, is a foreshadow cast upon the world's dial; pre-intimating that the glorious era is at hand when Babylon shall be utterly consumed, and the Jews shall march to their own happy and renovated land, and worship, saying, "Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord;" and mourning in bitterness of soul, as they march homeward, that their fathers were so far left to themselves as to cry, "Away with him, away with him; crucify him, crucify him!"

It is predicted that the kings of the earth should mourn and lament over the desolation of Babylon and the destruction of antichrist. Now, what is the general impression at this moment obviously and audibly made upon all the kings and governments of the earth? Great vexation that the Pope, *i. e.* antichrist, is losing, what they say is necessary to his independence,—his temporal sovereignty. France and Austria so lament the ruin that has taken place at Rome, that they have sent their armies to restore the former state of things. There is also too much sympathy expressed by all parties in our own Parliament, with what is now taking place at Rome. May not this be the commencement of an effort to avert the blow which will only make it fall more severe and terrible; and of that sympathy with her ruin

which shall be expressed by all, except those who have not received the mark of the beast in their foreheads, or in their hands?

There are three great facts which I wish to illustrate; the first is, that the destruction of Babylon, so vividly delineated in this 18th chapter of the Apocalypse, has now begun; the second, the recent disclosures that have taken place on all sides, tending to show that Babylon has been a curse, not a blessing, to the nations of the earth; and the third is the evidence, now coming out clearly and distinctly, of the fulfilment of the special feature in chap. xviii. 24, "In her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of them that were slain in the earth."

My first proposition then, is, that Babylon is not only now being consumed, but that the commencement of her final ruin has taken place. Let me give you the evidence that I have collected upon this subject. The first is a letter which many of you may have seen in the public prints, and which is to the following effect:—

A private letter from Rome, quoted in the *Times* of Friday, says:—"This poor dear place is going fast to the dogs. Nothing will be saved,—not even those magnificent remains that belong to the entire world, and not alone to those dreadful Romans that allow such pillage. You know the beautiful spot between the Colosseum and the Campidoglio, where there was a fine alley of trees. I have just passed over it, and the trees have been all dug up. All the ground is torn up, and cartloads of it are being taken away, in order to level it for a reviewing ground. Imagine their making away with the remains of the palace of the Cæsars and the Colonnas; perhaps even the arches! They have taken the chalices from St. Peter's, and melted them. All the bells, with one exception, have been taken from the churches. The beautiful gold rose, used once a-year by the Pope in a religious ceremony, was walled up to preserve it; but a spy informed the government, and it has been destroyed; and all the plate belonging to the Pope, some of which dated from Sextus V., has been melted, and the treasures of the two chapels have undergone the same operation. They insist upon all the statues, tombs, and balustrades in bronze being melted also: and when rich and even

poor individuals offered 25,000*f.* to save some bells at St. Philip's, and at Jesu and Maria, they said it was not the money, but the destruction of the bells they wanted. The holy offices of Easter are only to take place in one or two churches, and that in the simplest manner possible. The *chefs-d'œuvre* of art are being taken from the museums by the chiefs of the government. The church of St. John Lateran has not been touched yet. They set fire the other night to a number of carriages in the Via Babuine, belonging to a nobleman, out of vengeance. Water is kept ready, in case they should set fire to St. Peter's or the other churches."

I will now read to you another document, confirmatory of my impression that Rome is now receiving its premonitory warning: it is an extract from the *Roman Advertiser* of December 2, 1848:—

"It is impossible to contemplate without deep interest the recent departure of Pius IX., in the silence and secrecy of night, from the Eternal City, wherein he was crowned only two short years ago as its head, temporal and spiritual, the representative of St. Peter and God's vicegerent upon earth.

"Father Ventura, in a recent sermon, said, Pius IX. will, we hope, remember that the medal coined in honour of his election bore the inscription—*Non relinquam vos orphanos.*"

This last extract shows how truly the Pope assumes to take the place of Christ. Christ says, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come unto you;" — a coin was struck on the election of the present Pope, on which was engraved that promise of Christ, appropriated and applied to himself by Pius IX., as the Vice-Christ, *i. e.* the Antichrist. This same paper — the *Advertiser* — speaks thus of the Pope's recent fulmination, and shows how completely the pontifical power is gone: — "The Roman people have never been celebrated for the reverence with which they have received commendatory warnings. The present liberty of the press subjects the Pontiff's right of excommunication to a scrutinizing examination which it has never before been allowed to undergo in this Catholic city." — *Rom. Adv.*, Jan. 13, 1849.

In other words, the liberty of the press has now been obtained for the first time; and the press, like an impartial censor, has

passed its judgment even upon the bulls and anathemas issued by the Pope. The *Cotemporaneo*, another Roman newspaper, speaks thus of it, Jan. 20 : — “The excommunication should in justice be applied to those who counselled the Pope’s flight. The excommunication has been sold about the city, and it was a novel sight to see how the people turned the Pontifical act into ridicule, tearing it down and burning it. In the year 1849, the weapons tempered in the Vatican can no longer serve the cause of despotism. The Gospel can no longer be changed according to the pleasure of the Popes.” This reminds one of a scene in the 16th century, when Luther burned the Pope’s bull of excommunication in the fire which they had kindled in the streets of Wittenburg. In the Eternal City, where lately the Pope was absolute sovereign — where his will was law — where his thunders were believed to be divine — the solemn bull which he has issued is taken by his own subjects, and torn and burned upon the public streets.

It is no less evidence of the beginning of her judgments that the Right Reverend and Eminent the merchants, who have been enriched by her merchandize, their sales of indulgences, and other ecclesiastical traffic, begin to mourn over her, and lament that so great and goodly a city is about to come to nothing. The extract I give is from a speech of the Right Reverend Dr. Wiseman, Archbishop of Westminster. The health of the Pope was proposed at a public dinner, in June 1849, at which he was present, on which Dr. Wiseman thus spoke :—

“In rising to propose the next toast, his Lordship said, he experienced mingled feelings of pleasure and of regret. It was a toast ever received with deep feeling in a Catholic assembly ; but at the present moment there was a deeper and a melancholy interest attached to it, from the position in which the noble, generous, and sainted Pontiff who filled the chair of St. Peter was placed by the ingratitude of his subjects, and the base plottings of unprincipled agitators. A feeling of proud pleasure must arise in every Catholic heart to see the quiet, calm, and dignified manner in which the revered Father of the Faithful rose majestically, untroubled and serene, above the angry surges that were raging around him, performing his spiritual functions as Supreme, manifesting his anxieties for the most distant portions of the

church, as collectedly, whilst now an exile at Gaëta, as though seated on his throne in the halls of the Vatican. But a feeling of sorrowful melancholy o'erclouded the heart when we reflected on the state of Rome—of Rome, the Eternal City—Rome, so long the seat and centre of Catholicity, the throne of its Pontiff—Rome, the mistress of the Christian world, the depository of the most splendid monuments of ancient and modern art, the delight of the learned, the joy of the Catholic heart—now surrounded without by an hostile army, and within the prey to factions, and under the rule of a reckless banditti. It would seem as though the Almighty had purposely humbled the Sacred City, in order to test our love and confidence in him, and to afford the Catholic world an opportunity of displaying its affection and fidelity to his Vicegerent on earth. The last intelligence received purports that the French troops have entered the city as victors, and, strange as it may appear, yet one can hardly help feeling it to be a happiness that she is a captive for the moment, in the hope that order may once more be restored, and her sovereign replaced on the throne—for Rome is nothing without the Pope. It is difficult to know what to anticipate in the present state of affairs, but we cannot be wrong in wishing that whatever may, amidst his anxieties and cares, be the wish nearest and dearest to the heart of our beloved Pontiff,—that for which his prayers may be poured to the Throne of Mercy,—may be granted to him, and that he may live to return once more in peaceful triumph to the Sacred City, there to reign over the Church in tranquillity and length of days. (The toast was received with loud and repeated cheers.)

I will also read to you an extract from the most recent document which the Pope himself has penned, an allocution dated April 20, 1849, in which he almost echoes the words of Rev. xviii. :—

“Meanwhile there is no one who does not see with how many grievous wounds the immaculate spouse of Christ is now assailed in the very regions of the Pontifical State; with what chains, with what most shameful servitude she is more and more oppressed, and with what difficulties her visible head is overwhelmed. For who is so ignorant, that our communications with

the city of Rome and with its clergy, most dear to us, and with the whole episcopate and the other faithful of the Pontifical dominion, has been so obstructed, that we cannot freely send or receive even letters, although treating of ecclesiastical and spiritual affairs? Who knows not, that the city of Rome, the principal See of the Catholic Church, is at present—Oh sorrowful!—made a forest of roaring wild beasts, since it is filled with men of all nations, who, being either apostates or heretics, or masters of so-called *Communism* or *Socialism*, and animated with extreme hatred against the Catholic truth, do both by writings and every other means endeavour to teach and disseminate all kinds of pestiferous errors, and to pervert the minds and hearts of all, so that in the very city itself, if it were possible, the holiness of the Catholic religion and the unchangeable rule of faith may be depraved? Who knows not, or has not heard, that in the Pontifical State, the goods, revenues, and possessions of the Church have been seized with rash and sacrilegious daring, the most august churches stripped of their ornaments, the monasteries turned to profane uses; the virgins consecrated to God harassed; the most virtuous and distinguished ecclesiastics and religious cruelly persecuted, put in chains, and slain; the sacred and most illustrious bishops, even those invested with the dignity of the Cardinalate, violently dragged away from their flocks, and thrown into dungeons?"

Thus you have heard, first, the testimony of the Roman newspapers; secondly, the testimony of a Roman Catholic bishop in London; and thirdly, the testimony of the Pope himself, that great Babylon, in the language used in the Apocalyptic description of the effects of the pouring out of the seventh vial, is "coming into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the fierceness of his great wrath." Let me quote some more proofs that this is the fact, from other authentic sources. In February last, the National Assembly of Rome passed four decrees, the first of which I will read to you. But before I do so, let me beg of you to recollect, first, that chap. xviii. begins with the angel's voice proclaiming, "Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen;" and next, that in my previous lectures on the Apocalypse I showed you, that whenever there is a voice from heaven,

there is always to be traced the evidence of its echo upon earth. This first law passed by the Constituent Assembly was in these words :—

“The Papacy is **FALLEN**, in deed and in right, from the temporal government of the Roman States.”

And it was decreed by another order of the same assembly, that the armórial bearings of the Pope should be erased from all the public offices ; and when the Pope’s protest, dated February 14, was read in the National Assembly—a protest which, a few years ago, would have made them tremble,—they neither returned an answer to it, nor took any other notice of its contents than this, “*Viva la Repubblica !*”

On February 26, a decree was passed, ordaining that the superfluous bells in all the churches of Rome should be taken down, in order to be cast into cannon ; and when this order was enforced, 60,000 pounds of bronze were obtained from the bells so taken down, out of which, combined with other material, were formed sixty of the largest field-pieces. By another decree of the Constituent Assembly, the episcopal and apostolic palaces were ordered to be placed immediately under the surveillance of the Minister of Public Works, to be turned to public account, and all ecclesiastical property to pass into the possession of the State. The same paper—the *Roman Advertiser*—which I have already quoted, has also the following passage :—

“It has been frequently observed by serious and enlightened travellers, that any person ignorant of the Christian religion, on being first introduced into the glorious temple of St. Peter’s, and beholding the splendid habiliments and refulgent tiara of the Pope—the incense offered up to him—the repeated genuflections before him—the carrying him about above the heads of others—in short, all outward signs of adoration paid to him, would inevitably draw the conclusion that the Pope was himself the deity of the place. It will be asked, What was wanting this year in the Easter solemnities ? There was wanting the Vicar of Christ carried through our fanes.—In his absence, God and the people remained.”

How corroborative of what I have stated are these words, that the Pope is Antichrist, sitting in the temple of God, showing

himself as if he were God. The question is asked in this paper, how they have got on without the Pope? and it is answered substantially in the language of Scripture truth,—“Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” A very noble sentiment is this, again corroborating the conclusion I am endeavoring to draw, that the consumption of Babylon has now commenced, that the knell of her doom begins to sound from the place of her crimes; and bishops in London, the Pope in Gaëta, and newspapers in Italy, are all testifying, with one simultaneous voice, that Babylon begins to fall, and that God has given her to drink of the cup of his righteous indignation.

I have shown, then, my first proposition, namely, that Rome is coming under the judgments, and that the Pope and those who are connected with him are beginning to feel that it is so. I might show you that this is not confined to Rome. The Jesuits have been expelled from Europe; the priests in Austria and in France are constrained to obey the behests of an infidel population; and in Ireland, I am informed by several excellent ministers of the Irish Church, the revolution which has taken place in the feelings of the people, who once all but worshipped the priests, is scarcely credible; and in Ireland also all the signs and symbols of the impending downfall of the popedom are every day developing themselves with greater distinctness.

Now, do not conclude that I justify all the measures, or applaud the instruments, that are employed to destroy the popedom: I do not justify the deeds of the French and Austrians, who, in helping the destruction of Rome, which is the purpose of God, are endeavouring only to accomplish their own ambitious purposes. God used Napoleon to punish the guilty nations of the continent of Europe; Cyrus of old was his battle-axe; and God is now using men of any religion and men of no religion to execute his righteous judgments upon that city which has corrupted the nations of the earth, and the doom of which is fixed, so that no human power can reverse it.

Having noticed, then, this first proposition, I will now proceed to show you that the impression is becoming deeper every day, that the Church of Rome has been a curse and a calamity instead

of being a blessing to mankind. You recollect that when she comes into remembrance before God, the nations of the earth, smitten with a sense of her crimes, many of them concur in contributing to her humiliation and ruin. And the first fact that I will mention is, that within the last year or two, I may say, some of the most remarkable evidences have been given of the utter inefficiency of the Church of Rome to bless or benefit mankind. I might refer you to the authentic statement given by Mr. Seymour, in his "Pilgrimage to Rome," and his "Mornings with the Jesuits." I may refer also to the very admirable volumes composed by Mr. Whiteside, an eminent barrister in Dublin, who lately visited Rome; to the statements of the Honourable Mr. Percy, who also has recorded his experience; and lastly, the extremely brilliant, but, I must add, partial History of England by the Right Hon. Mr. Macaulay. Upon this subject he has recorded his judgment as an historian in the following eloquent and conclusive terms:—

"But during the last three centuries, to stunt the growth of the human mind has been her chief object. Throughout Christendom, whatever advance has been made in knowledge, in freedom, in wealth, and in the arts of life, has been made in spite of her, and has everywhere been in inverse proportion to her power. The loveliest and most fertile provinces of Europe have, under her rule, been sunk in poverty, in political servitude, and in intellectual torpor; while Protestant countries, once proverbial for sterility and barbarism, have been turned by skill and industry into gardens, and can boast of a long list of heroes and statesmen, philosophers and poets. Whoever, knowing what Italy and Scotland naturally are, and what, four hundred years ago, they actually were, shall now compare the country round Rome with the country round Edinburgh, will be able to form some judgment as to the tendency of Papal domination. The descent of Spain, once the first among monarchies, to the lowest depths of degradation,—the elevation of Holland, in spite of many natural disadvantages, to a position such as no commonwealth so small has ever reached, teach the same lesson. Whoever passes in Germany from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant principality, in Switzerland from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant canton, in Ireland

from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant county, finds that he has passed from a lower to a higher grade of civilization. On the other side of the Atlantic the same law prevails. The Protestants of the United States have left far behind them the Roman Catholics of Mexico, Peru, and Brazil. The Roman Catholics of Lower Canada remain inert, while the whole continent round them is in a ferment with Protestant activity and enterprise. The French have doubtless shown an energy and an intelligence which, even when misdirected, have justly entitled them to be called a great people. But this apparent exception, when examined, will be found to confirm the rule; for in no country that is called Roman Catholic has the Roman Catholic Church, during several generations, possessed so little authority as in France."

One cannot but remark in this place, what we must surely consider a very illogical inference which Mr. Macaulay draws from these premises: "Therefore, let us give to every priest in Ireland some £200 a year, that he may teach those principles which I thus believe to be destructive to the happiness and to the progress of our nation." His historical testimony remains, and will weigh with statesmen; and while it remains so clear, so decided, so true, it may lead himself and others to protest against the very deed they once contemplated, and so join in exhausting, not building up, the great apostasy.

Let me also state another fact which I have drawn from the statistics of the Roman States, that in the Papal States there are 6 archbishops, 72 bishops, and 50,000 inferior clergy, to two and a half millions of population. In other words, in the States of the Pope there is an ecclesiastical teacher for every 50 people—in the city of Rome itself there is an ecclesiastic for every 30 people; so that the conclusion must be thrust upon you, if Popery has failed in Rome, it has failed not for want of means of expressing it, or machinery to work it, or ministers to teach it; and if it has failed under circumstances so favourable for its triumphs, the reason must lie, not in any defect in means or machinery, but in the inherent defects of the system itself. Compare the city of Rome with the city of London: in London it is calculated that the ministers of religion of every denomination do not amount to one for every 8,000 people. In Rome, there is a minister of

Popery for every 30 people. If then Popery has failed at Rome, the fault is in the system ; it cannot be deficiency in the machinery, for that has been more than adequate, most effective, most energetic, most ably sustained, most strenuously worked ; if Protestantism has failed in London, the fault may be in the inadequacy of the machinery and fewness of hands to work it, for it has not been carried out by a system adequate to the population amongst which it has been at work. When the earthquake, to which I have referred, convulsed the European continent, and when its first vibrations were felt in the capital of Italy, the whole population of Rome rose in one mass, swept their pontifical monarch from his throne, and sent him an exile and an outcast to seek refuge in a foreign land. But when the vibrations of the same earthquake smote our own great city, if the people had risen against their rulers, as other nations of Europe had done, it might then have been said that it was because Christianity had not had the means of applying its lesson to the hearts of the people, and therefore they could not express its loyalty and duties in their homes. But what was the fact ? the moment that the first symptoms of rebellion showed themselves, the whole population rose, not to dismiss the monarch that they love, nor to destroy the tree under the shadow of which they and their fathers have prospered and become mighty ; but to rally round that throne, and to shield that tree, so that when their children should tread upon their ashes, they should read on their tombstones, " We laboured, and ye have entered into our labours ; and if we have not increased the heritage we received, at least we have not diminished it, but handed it down to you unshorn of its grandeur, unharmed in its moral, social, and national existence." You have here conclusive evidence that Protestantism, even when defectively taught, is a blessing to a country ; and that Popery, even under the most advantageous means for its application, is a calamity and a curse. The Roman Constituent Assembly has expressed its mind as clearly :—

" A new nation presents itself to you to solicit and to offer friendly feeling, respect, fraternity. The nation that formerly was the most illustrious on the face of the earth, presents itself to you as a new one. But between the ancient grandeur and this resur-

rection the Papal power stood for upwards of a thousand years. People of Europe, we knew each other when the name of the people of Rome inspired terror; we have known each other when our name excited pity. You may abhor the memory of that age of dominion and violence, but you cannot condemn us to excite for ever the pity of the world. Which of you would wish to be pitied? The people of the Roman State have determined to reform their political constitution, and have created a republic; and before this great act of the imprescriptible sovereignty of the people, the past is destroyed and vanishes. The people have willed it. Who is above the people? God alone; but God created the people for liberty. The people have willed it, and they need not seek justification for the past; their reason is anterior to every human act. But, if we turn our eyes to the past, we may with tranquillity contemplate the ruins of the Papal power, much more so than the latter, when it contemplated the ruins of our ancient political greatness. The history of Italy was a tale of sorrow, and a large portion of it was ascribed to the Papal power. And notwithstanding, when the Pope came forward and placed the cross on the national banner, the world saw that the Italians were ready to forget the faults of the Holy See, and the revolution began in the name of a Pope; but that was the touchstone of what a Pope could or could not do. The predecessors of the last sovereign had been too cautious to attempt the trial, and their power was measured only by the misery entailed upon the people. The last sovereign was the first to risk the attempt, and wished to stop when he discovered that he had revealed a terrible truth, namely, the impotency of the Papal power to render the Italian nation free, independent, and glorious; he wished to withdraw from the work, but it was too late, for Papacy had judged itself. It is hence that the downfall of Popery has been so near its glory; the glory of the Papal power was the northern light that precedes the darkness. We still hoped; but a system of reaction was the answer that came from the Papal power. Reaction fell; the Pope at first dissembled, saw the tranquillity of the people, and fled; and in his flight he bore with him the certainty of exciting civil war; he violated the political constitution, left us without a government, repelled

the messengers of the people, fomented discord, then threw himself into the arms of the most ferocious enemy of Italy, and excommunicated the people! These facts sufficiently show that the Papal sovereignty neither could, nor would, modify itself, and nothing was left but to bear it or destroy it. It was destroyed. If the liberality of kings, or the toleration of nations, had placed the Papal power in the city of the Scipios and Cæsars, instead of in the heart of France, or on the banks of the Danube or the Thames, was that a reason for depriving the Italians of all the rights common to nations—the country and liberty? And if it be true that the possession of a temporal sovereignty be necessary to the spiritual power of the Pontificate, although it was not on such a condition that Jesus Christ promised immortality to his Church, was Rome then destined to become the patrimony of the Pope, and be so for ever? Rome, the patrimony of a sovereignty, that to subsist was forced to oppress, and to be glorious was forced to fall? And, as a patrimony of Papacy, was Rome to be the permanent cause of the ruin of Italy? Rome, whose traditions, whose name, nay, whose ruins so loudly speak of liberty and patriotism? Provoked and abandoned to ourselves, we have effected the revolution without spilling a drop of blood—we have re-edified almost without letting the sound of demolition be heard—we have completely uprooted the sovereignty of the Popes, after having patiently submitted to it for so many ages—not from any hatred of Papacy, but from love of our country. When a revolution has been effected with such morality of purpose and means, it is at once proved that this people did not deserve to be under the sway of Papacy, but was worthy of being its own master, worthy of the Republic! It is worthy, therefore, of being admitted into the great family of nations, and of obtaining your friendship and esteem. The Roman Republic will bear the stamp of its origin. It will make a free people defend the religious independence of the Pontiff, to whom the religion of a republican people will be worth more than a few roods of territory. The Roman Republic proposes to apply the laws of morality and universal charity to the line of conduct it intends to follow, and to the development of its political life.

“For the Assembly,

“The President, G. GALLETTI.

“*Rome, March 2.*”

True to her historical character, neither the Pope nor his ministers repent of their idolatry under their judgments: on the contrary, they cleave the more to the curse that consumes them, provoke the judgments and precipitate the ruin decreed for them.

In a letter dated "November," from Gaëta, the Pope says:—

"We also repose all confidence in this, that the Blessed Virgin, who has been raised 'by the greatness of her merits above all the choirs of angels up to the throne of God;' who has crushed, under the foot of her virtues, the head of the old serpent, and who, 'placed between Christ and the Church,' full of grace and sweetness, has ever rescued the Christian people from the greatest calamities, from the snares and from the attacks of all their enemies, and has saved them from ruin, will in like manner deign, taking pity on us with that immense tenderness which is the habitual out-pouring of her maternal heart, to drive away from us by her instant and all-powerful protection before God, the sad and lamentable misfortunes, the cruel anguish, the pains and necessities which we suffer; to turn aside the scourges of Divine wrath which afflict us by reason of our sins, to appease and dissipate the frightful storms of evil with which the Church is assailed on all sides, to the unmeasured grief of our souls; and, in fine, to change our sorrow into joy.

"For you know perfectly, Venerable Brethren, that the foundation of our confidence is in the most holy Virgin; since it is in her that God has placed the plenitude of all good in such sort, that if there be in us any hope, if there be any spiritual health, we know that it is from her that we receive it, . . . because such is the will of Him who hath willed that we should have all by the instrumentality of Mary.

"Gaëta, Feb. 2, 1849."

I have thus given you the evidence of these two propositions: first, that the Church of Rome is now coming under the judgment of God; and secondly, that as she comes under these judgments her character and her inefficiency are becoming every day more revealed. The third great fact, to which I will briefly refer in my next, is, that "in her was found the blood of saints, and of them that were slain in the earth." I will conclude this part

of my subject, in the meantime, with some personal and practical lessons, which I think ought to be drawn from all that I have stated.

First, I would ask, should you not feel infinite delight that the great obstruction to the spread of the glorious Gospel is now passing away, or soon to pass away? Does not the mariner upon the ocean's bosom rejoice when the cloud that obscures the pole-star has been dissolved? Does not the traveller in the desert rejoice when the sun begins to shine forth and lead him to his home? Do not angels in heaven rejoice that great Babylon begins to fall? Are not the holy inhabitants of glory called upon to rejoice that the hour of her judgment is come? Surely, what causes such joy to the saints in heaven — what is such a contribution to the spread of the Gospel upon earth, is not a topic unworthy of the study, or to be regarded without the praise and thanksgiving of the people of God. But this great fact, while it tells us that a great obstruction is being removed from the onward march of the glorious Gospel, also teaches us another great and still more important truth — that we are upon the eve of the world's close; great shadows, like birds of night, begin to rise above the horizon — that night which will be so dark and cold because the day which succeeds it will be so glorious. It is known to every one that the night becomes coldest and darkest just before the sun begins to dawn. We shall find now, that all strange and horrible opinions, all great and terrible delusions, so great and so deceptive that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect — will begin to spread and to thicken all around. It becomes us then, my dear friends, to see that our footing is on the Rock of Ages, to see that we are not partaking of the sins, in order that we may thus escape the judgments which will so speedily descend upon Babylon. I ask then, to whom do you belong? to Christ or Antichrist? to the true Church or to the false? The longer I live, the less I seem to care to what denomination you belong; but the longer I live, the more I care that you should belong to that blessed Saviour whose living members alone will stand the crash of that crisis which thunders already at our doors. Are you resting then, my dear friends, on Christ's glorious sacrifice? Are you placing your whole confidence in this fact alone, that "he

who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him?" Are you sanctified, renewed, regenerated, by his Holy Spirit? Are you living Christians? Is your Christianity a mere name, or is it power? Is your religion a mere conventionalism, or is it life? Is it power? Is it that plastic principle which knits you to your Lord, and consecrates you to the happiness and the well-being of mankind? Those establishments on which we have too much relied will in all probability soon be broken up; those privileges for which we have fought will be taken away; those distinctions about which we quarrelled will be swallowed up; nothing but vital, genuine religion will survive the coming catastrophe or stand the ordeal. And, my dear friends, to belong to Rome it is not necessary that you should be a citizen of Rome. He that trusts in his baptism, as if it were regeneration, is a Roman Catholic; he that trusts in his church, as if that alone could save him, is a Roman Catholic; he who believes that all outside his communion is Samaria, and that all inside of it is the true Israel, is a Roman Catholic; he that can imprison for principle, or persecute for difference of creed, may call himself what he pleases, but he is a Roman Catholic. He that is trusting in his tears, in his prayers, in his sufferings, in his sacrifices, in anything he is, in anything he has done, or in anything he has suffered, may call himself what he pleases, but he is a Roman Catholic; and when judgment comes, the nation that is tinged with popery will feel that those who participate in any way in the sins of Rome shall share most disastrously in her judgments. My dear friends, let me abjure you to decide for Christ—to take up your position on the Lord's side. Do not be ashamed to avow it wherever you are—in the shop, in the warehouse, in the parliament, in the church—do not be ashamed to acknowledge whose you are, and for whose sake you are prepared to live religiously, and to die divinely.

LECTURE XIX.

THE BLOOD OF SAINTS IN ROME.

"Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."—REV. ii. 20.

"And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."—REV. xviii. 24.

A PROMINENT crime of this woman, Jezebel, was idolatry; this is one of her distinctive brands. The Church of Rome is, above all, stained with this crime—a crime which cleaves to her at this day as a corroding and consuming curse; and so far from repenting of it in the midst of the judgments that have so recently overtaken her, she has, through her head and representative, and in her very last manifesto, invoked the Virgin Mary as her patroness, and as her in whom her best hope is placed, and from whom she expects great deliverance. The next great offence of which this woman was guilty, namely, persecution, is recorded in I. Kings xviii. 14, where we are told how she "cut off all the prophets of the Lord, except those who were hid by Obadiah in a cave." I need not tell you that persecution has long been the characteristic of the Roman Catholic Church, so that in this respect also the anti-type answers to the type: the Bishop's oath—the Fourth Lateran—the Bull Unigenitus—the history of Europe, are proofs. In the third and last place, Jezebel was suddenly consumed and destroyed by a most ignominious death; and so it is said of the great apostasy, which is the antitype of her: "I will kill thy children with death; and thou shalt know that I am he which searcheth the reins and trieth the hearts, to give to every man according to his works."

I have thus, in these three great particulars, hinted at the chain of reasoning by which Jezebel may be shown to be designed to be a perfect type of Rome, which is her complete anti-type. It is now stated, you observe, that during the destruction of this great apostasy and of its master builder, so graphically delineated in chap. xviii., there is to be a startling disclosure and dragging to light of the persecutions, the sanguinary cruelties and murders of the Church of Rome. It is whilst she is being consumed that this fact evolved: "In her was found the blood of saints, and of them that were slain on the earth." It is the last generation of Rome that is to be visited for all the sanguinary crimes of generations that have preceded. Just as our Lord said of the Jews in his day, "that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, who was slain between the temple and the altar." You will recollect that, at the opening of the fifth seal, to which long ago I called your attention, there is a cry emitted by the martyrs who are beneath the altar, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet a little season." That little season finishes with the events recorded in Rev. xviii. which I have read. And if it be the fulfilment of the eighteenth chapter which is now taking place in Rome, then the last days of ecclesiastical persecution are come; imprisonment and proscription for conscience' sake is about to cease—it may be not without a struggle; then the sword that has been stained with the blood of martyrs shall be sheathed, preparatory to being turned into the pruning-hook; the fagots shall no more be collected, and the flame of the *auto-da-fé* shall blaze no more; for she who persecuted the saints, and cherished and gloried in the principles of persecution, and is drunk with their blood—is in her turn about to reap the judgments she has deserved; and a new era, and new prospects, and new glories, are about to dawn upon the world that has so long pined, and prayed, and waited for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Now, if this be true, surely it is an event worthy of our notice. Do not say, ministers should keep their eye within the

boards of the Bible only, and see no facts outside ; I submit they should also look abroad : they should endeavour to show God's finger writing on the acres of the earth, and on the streets of cities, and on the floors of palaces, the truth which God's Spirit has inspired in the chapters of the Bible ; I cannot conceive that it is an uninstruative or an unedifying sermon when the minister calls his people's attention to great truths which the Spirit has thought it right to indite, and to the probable accomplishment of those great truths which the providence of God is making manifest every day that we live. The most skeptical must admit that the events of the last two years, in weight, in importance, in rapidity, in brilliancy of effect, in range of action, are not behind any of the events of the last sixteen centuries. The worldly men that I have met with are not only startled, but awed, at the events of the age ; and even men who used to smile at the views of prophecy I endeavoured to enunciate in Exeter Hall, are heard saying, " Well, I begin to think there is something in these things." Great statesmen are, many of them, at their wits' end, and wondering what is to be the issue. But we know, what great statesmen without the Bible never can learn, that all this is but the tuning of innumerable instruments selected and prepared of God, in order that each may take its part in that glorious jubilee in which all creation shall join as its song of triumph, " Hallelujah ! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." We know that all the stir and noise are but the clearing of the stage for the manifestation of the sons of God. We know that it is love ; all things, —the fall of Louis Philippe, the ebbs and flows of the Austrian dynasty, the breaking up of the German empire, the flight of the Pope,—all these not sent in wrath to the people of God ; on the contrary, they bear in their bosoms countless benedictions, and in their loudest explosions may be heard by the sanctified ear, the music of the approaching footsteps of Him whose is the kingdom in right, and whose shall be in fact the kingdoms and the powers of this world. We rejoice that it is so—we thank God that our lot is cast in an epoch which is big with so glorious issues. Surely it becomes the minister of the Gospel to look around him ; to weigh these accumulating events, and see whether God's word casts any light upon them, or whether they are

those dark, and objectless, tumbling incidents and accidents which the world's philosophy pronounces them to be.

I have said, then, that at the destruction of Babylon this great disclosure is to be made, that "in her was found the blood of saints." Now I state this, not in order to launch fulminations against Rome—not to indulge and kindle feelings of antipathy towards her—although that man cannot love Christ who does not hate Antichrist, not indeed the poor creature Pius IX., but the awful usurper of Christ's place, crown, prerogatives, and empire. Rome is not to be reformed; she is to be convulsed, revolutionized, destroyed. It is a great fact, which every one should recollect, and which any one who has read the history of that church must know, that every attempt to reform the Church of Rome from *within* has been invariably suppressed, and the originator of it martyred; while every attempt to reform the Church of Rome from *without* has ended in her heresy becoming more inveterate in error, apostasy and pride.

The conclusion then which we justly draw from these facts is, that that church is not to be reformed at all. God's people will leave her, and then she will be utterly destroyed; till they escape she will stand. The cry, therefore, which should be sounded forth from every pulpit at this moment, and enunciated on every platform is, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues:" a call which appeals also to the whole visible church, to have nothing to do with her—her errors, her principles, her practices. And if any portion of the visible church will imprison the servants of Christ, or those who profess to be so, or try to burn, or imprison, or proscribe them, because they err or act rashly, they are sharing in the sins, and, as sure as they do so, they will share in the judgments that are coming upon Babylon. None will escape those judgments but those who renounce her communion, abjure her principles, abhor her doctrines, and stand faithful and true to Him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and will bear no partner on his throne and no rival to his glory.

Having noticed these preliminary facts, let me now observe, that during the last ten years, I believe from 1836, when Dens' theology was first brought to light by Robert McGhee, till the

present moment, there has been growing and accumulating evidence of the persecuting spirit, the proscriptions, and cruelties of the Church of Rome. I will mention an interesting fact, stated by one who has never professed an ardent partiality for Protestantism, whatever preference or leaning he may have towards the Roman Catholic church. When he speaks as an historian, he speaks faithfully of that church, though he sometimes speaks as a partizan in favour of her maintenance and civil support; I mean, Macaulay.

A devout Christian, as referred to by him, born in Rome in 1500, published in 1542 a little work on the benefits of Christ's death. It was so popular, in the depths of the Italian darkness, that 40,000 copies were sold in six years. As a matter of course, he was seized and thrown into the Inquisition; and the chief accusation against him was this, "that he ascribed justification solely to faith in the mercy of God forgiving our sins through Jesus Christ." After three years he was convicted, and committed to the flames. In a letter written to his wife, just before his martyrdom, he says, "The hour is come when I must give up my life to my Lord and Father and God, and I depart as joyfully as if I was going to the nuptials of the Son of the great King." Of him and of the church that consumed him, the eminent historian to whom I have alluded, thus writes in the "Edinburgh Review" for 1849:—

"It was not on moral influence alone that the Catholic Church relied. In Spain and Italy, the civil power was unsparingly employed in her support. The Inquisition was armed with new powers, and inspired with a new energy. If Protestantism, or the semblance of Protestantism, showed itself in any quarter, it was instantly met, not by party-teasing persecution, but that sort which tears down and crushes all but a very few select spirits. Whoever was suspected of heresy, whatever his rank, his learning, or reputation, was to purge himself to the satisfaction of a severe and vigilant tribunal, or to die by fire. Heretical books were sought out, and destroyed with unsparing rigour. Works which were once in every house, were so effectually suppressed, that no copy of them is now to be found in the most extensive libraries. One book, in particular, entitled 'The Benefits of the

Death of Christ,' had this fate. It was written in Tuscan, was many times reprinted, and was eagerly read in every part of Italy. But the inquisitors detected in it the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone. They proscribed it; and it is now *as utterly lost* as the second decade of Livy." The book has since been discovered, and is published by the Tract Society.

To give an idea of the persistency, and age, and antiquity of the persecuting spirit of Popery, I would call attention to the following facts:—

"The first extensive persecution for religious opinions, after the establishment of Christianity, was that levelled against the Paulicians, in the East, and afterwards in Bulgaria, about the ninth century. Letters of Popes to the Emperors are extant, inciting them to this persecution. After many individual cases of martyrdom, the more sweeping course of a war of extermination was taken, and tens of thousands fell by the sword; their crime being simply an adherence to the religion of the New Testament.

"Early in the eleventh century the same spirit of persecution began to show itself in the West. In A. D. 1017, twelve or fourteen canons of Orleans, men of learning and piety, were burnt at the stake.

"In A. D. 1075, Pope Gregory VII. writes to the King of Denmark that there is a province of Italy *inhabited by heretics*, upon whom he, the Pope, invites the said king to make war!

"In A. D. 1126, Peter of Bruys, an eminent preacher of the truth, was burnt to death by the Papists, near Toulouse; and his follower, Henry of Lausanne, was put to death by Alberic, the papal legate, in A. D. 1147. In that same year, Evervinus of Steinfield, near Cologne, records the burning of a body of heretics, by the archbishop of that place. About that period, so far from there being 'no heretics,' *i. e.* no Protestants, William of Newbury says, 'that they seemed to be multiplied beyond the sand of the sea.' Eckbert says, that they were increased to multitudes in 'all countries.'

"Towards the end of that century we find the followers of Peter Waldo suffering in numbers. Stephen de Borbone states that he was present when *eighty* of Waldo's sect were condemned

to the flames. And Alberic, in his Chronicle, speaks of *one hundred and eighty-two*; a massacre which he terms, *holocaustum placabile Domino*.

"At the beginning of the thirteenth century the Pope Innocent III., finding Narbonne filled with 'heretics,' proclaimed a crusade against them. He thus precipitated upon Languedoc a mass of 300,000 fanatics, eager to revel in the spoil and blood of the heretics, and headed by the unrelenting Dominic, the founder of the Inquisition. It was in one of their assaults upon the devoted Bezieres, that the papal legate, being asked how the Catholics should be distinguished from the heretics, answered, '*Kill them all!* the Lord will know his own!' That same legate, writing to Innocent, computes the victims at *fifteen thousand!*

"The Albigenses were exterminated. But still 'heresy' remained. In A. D. 1259, Uberto, lord of Cremona, Vercella, &c. was a confirmed 'heretic,' maintaining schools and scriptural preaching throughout his dominions. In A. D. 1210, *twenty-four* Waldenses were condemned at Paris; in A. D. 1304, the inquisitors burnt *one hundred and thirteen*; and in A. D. 1378, another large body. In A. D. 1380, we find an inquisitor putting one hundred and fifty persons to death at Grenoble. About A. D. 1391, the inquisitors in Saxony and Pomerania apprehended four hundred and forty-three. We now reach the times of the Lollards, of Wickliff, of Huss, and of Jerome of Prague; and every year is marked by fire, and smoke, and blood."

It is literally true that there is no spot, from the summit of Calvary itself to the wildest ravines and most sequestered glens of the Cottian Alps, which has not been stained with the blood of the saints of God, shed by the hands of the Roman Catholic church. No century has rolled past, since the establishment of her power, which has not witnessed the fagots collected and kindled, and the saints burned, by her of whom we are told in this book that she is "drunk with the blood of saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." But the grandest discovery of these condemning facts is reserved for the day of her destruction.

Let us then ascertain what facts of this description have come to light during the last few weeks. First of all, it appears that

on the 18th of February, the records of which have only recently reached us, an edict was passed at Rome to the following effect :—

“On the 28th February an edict of the executive triumvirs was ratified by the National Assembly, to the following effect: ‘The tribunal of the Holy Office [Inquisition] is for ever abolished in Rome. A pillar, commemorative of this act, shall be erected on the piazza in front of the building hitherto desecrated to such unholy object, that posterity may not forget this solemn deed. The Minister of Public Works is charged with the execution thereof.’ The only prisoners found, when the government officers broke into the concern, were two nuns undergoing incarceration for misdemeanours, which, in the case of a Roman vestal, were punished by living burial. There was also found a bishop, or at least a man who had given himself out as one, and had acted in that capacity in Syria and Egypt, until detected as an impostor. He had been rotting in this dungeon for the last twenty-five years. All records were found burnt, and traces of recent incineration were very perceptible.”

But the most remarkable thing is a document issued by the governing body at Rome, which is a complete commentary on the text. “In her was found the blood of saints.” It is to the following effect :—

“Memorial regarding the tribunal of the Holy Office at the time of its suppression in February, 1849.

“In consequence of a decree of the Roman Constituent Assembly, by which the suppression of the tribunal of the Holy Office was resolved, the government ordered that the Fathers of the Dominican order then inhabiting that vast locality, should remove to the convent called Della Minerva, the chief seat of their order. They were, in number, eight, exercising the functions of commissary, chancellor, &c. The doors were then carefully sealed by the Roman notary, Caggiotti, to prevent the abstraction of any object, and a keeper was appointed to the premises. These precautions taken, the inventory was commenced. The first place visited was the ground-floor of the edifice, where were the prisons, and the stables, coach-houses, kitchen, cellars, and other conveniences for the use of the assessor and the father inquisitors. This part of the building was to be immediately pre-

pared for the reception of the civic artillery, with the train belonging to it.

"Some new doors were opened in the walls, and part of a pavement raised. In this operation human bones were found, and a trap-door discovered, which induced a resolution to make excavations in certain spots pointed out by persons well acquainted with the locality. Digging very deep in one place, a great number of human skeletons were found, some of them placed so close together, and so amalgamated with lime, that no bone could be moved without being broken. In the roof of another subterranean chamber a large ring was found fixed. It is supposed to have been used in administering the torture. It still remains there. Along the whole length of this same room, stone steps, rather broad, were attached to the wall; these probably served for the prisoners to sit or recline on. In a third under-ground room was found a quantity of very black, rich earth, intermingled with human hair, of such a length that it seemed women's rather than men's hair; here also human bones were found. In this dungeon a trap-door was formed in the thickness of the wall, which opened into a passage in the flat above, leading to the room where examinations were conducted. Among the inscriptions made with charcoal on the wall, it was observed that many appeared of very recent date, expressing in most affecting terms the sufferings of every kind endured in these chambers. The person of most note found in the prisons of the Inquisition was a bishop named Kasner, who had been in confinement for above twenty years. He related that he had arrived in Rome, from the Holy Land, having in his possession papers which had belonged to an ecclesiastic there. Passing himself for that person, he succeeded in surprising the court of Rome into ordaining and consecrating him a bishop. The fraud was afterwards discovered, and Kasner, being then on his way to Palestine, was arrested, and brought to the prison of the Holy Office, where he expected to have ended his days, less, as he expressed himself, to expiate his own fraud, than the gross blunder of the court of Rome, which had no other means of concealing his character of bishop, its own absolute laws preventing his being deprived of it.

"The inventory of the contents of the ground-flat being finished

in a few days, it was then thrown open to the impatient curiosity of the public. The crowd that resorted to the scene was very great, and the public indignation rose so high, that there was a loud and general cry for the destruction of an edifice of such detestable memory. This feeling was so strong, that, on a Sunday afternoon, in March, fagots were thrown into the cellars and other under-ground rooms, with the intention of setting fire to the building; and this would have been accomplished, had not a battalion of civic guards rushed to the spot from the Piazza di S. Pietro. To the truth of all that is here related, thousands, both Italians and foreigners, who visited the place, can testify; and there exists also a detailed account of everything, written and solemnly attested with legal forms.

“Passing to the upper flat, the attention of the government was especially directed to the chancery and the archives; the first containing all the current affairs of the Inquisition; the second, jealously guarding its acts from its institution until now. Before commencing the catalogue of the contents of the chancery, it was resolved to remove such papers as might disturb or compromise the tranquillity of those persons who had had relations with the Holy Office.

“Attention was especially directed to the book called *Solecitazione* (it contains reports), and to the correspondence. This was done by order of the government, which thereby gave another proof of that moderation which its enemies deny to it. There results, from a careful examination of these documents, which remain for the inspection of such as desire proofs, that the past government made use of this tribunal, strictly ecclesiastical in its institution, also for temporal and political objects; and that the most culpable abuse was made of sacramental confession, especially that of women, rendering it subservient both to political purposes and to the most abominable licentiousness. It can be shown, from documents, that the cardinals secretaries of state wrote to the commissary to the assessor of the Holy Office to procure information as to the conduct of suspected individuals, both at home and abroad, and to obtain knowledge of state secrets by means of confession, especially those of foreign courts and cabinets. In fact, there exist long correspondences, and voluminous

processes, and severe sentences, pronounced upon *La Giorine Italia*, *La Jeune Suisse*, the Masonic societies of England and Scotland, and the anti-religious sects of America, &c. There is an innumerable quantity of information and processes on scandalous and obscene subjects, in which the members of regular religious societies are usually implicated.

“Passing from the chancery to the archives, which is in the second floor, it appeared on first entering as if everything was in its usual place; but on further inspection it was found, with much astonishment, that though the labels and cases were in their places, they were emptied of the packets of papers and documents indicated by the inscriptions without. Some conjecture that the missing packets have been carried to the convent Della Minerva, or were hidden in the houses of private persons; while others suppose that they were burnt by the Dominican fathers. This last hypothesis receives weight from the circumstance that in November, 1848, shortly after the departure of the Pope from Rome, the civic guard came in much haste to the Holy Office, from having observed great clouds of smoke issuing from one of its chimneys, accompanied by a strong smell of burnt paper. But, whatever were the means, the fact is certain, that in the archives of the Inquisition the most important trials were not to be found; such, for instance, as those of Galileo Galilei and of Giordano Bruno; nor was there the correspondence regarding the Reformation in England, in the sixteenth century, nor many other precious records. There remains, however, nearly complete, a collection of decrees, beginning with the year 1549, down to our own days. They are divided year by year, each volume containing the decrees of one year. Of these, of all that was contained in the chancery and the archives of the Holy Office, a catalogue has been taken, with every legal formality of certification. It ought to be added, that after the abovementioned threat of setting fire to the Holy Office, it was unanimously decreed by the Assembly, that instead of destroying that vast edifice, it should be portioned into dwellings for poor families of Rome. In consequence of this decision the government was obliged to remove all the papers in the chancery and archives, along with three libraries existing in the Holy Office, to the Palazzo dell’

Apolinare, which was the residence assigned to the Minister of Finance.

“Of these three libraries one was private property, the other two belonged to the Inquisition. Of these last, one is most important, containing copies of the original editions of the works of the Reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, now become extremely rare. The other is of less consequence. In it are many recent publications; and it appears that the revisore (*revisori*) at the custom-house of Rome were in the habit of extracting books consigned to the booksellers there, without making any compensation.

“It must not be omitted to notice, that the Holy Office had its independent revenue, arising from gifts of state property, chiefly bestowed by Sixtus V. and Pius IV., amounting clear to about 8,000 scudi. This sum was chiefly spent in paying the monks attached to the Inquisition, some of whom received considerable salaries. In the above income is not included the money exacted from prisoners as board; the account of what was paid, for example, by the famous Abbess of Monte Castrilli, was found to be 3,000 scudi. The authorized paid agents of the Holy Office, called *patentali*, were well remunerated; indeed, this was a system by which many persons were demoralized and corrupted, whose birth and education should have removed them far from such a base and guilty traffic, but who were tempted, perhaps, by necessity.

“To conclude. In a few categories we may sum up the results of this inquiry:—

“1. That the court of Rome availed itself of the tribunal of the Holy Office for temporal and political ends.

“2. That to succeed in its purposes the Holy Office had, especially, recourse to confession, of which it made the most enormous and abominable abuse, not only violating its secrecy, but tampering with its integrity.

“3. By means of confession, the most odious licentiousness was insinuated in the confessionals. With this branch the Holy Office occupied itself with extraordinary diligence, but without finding a remedy for the causes of such scandal.

"4. That the Holy Office corrupted all classes, buying information and secrets.

"5. And lastly. That the ecclesiastical nuncios at foreign courts are in constant correspondence with the Holy Office, and, from possessing means of procuring intelligence quite peculiar to themselves, keep the court of Rome informed of the most hidden political secrets."

So fully is the fact illustrated which is announced at the close of this chapter, that whilst by her sorceries all the nations of the earth were deceived, "in her was found," as I shall still further prove, "the blood of prophets and of saints, and of them that were slain on the earth."

The next document to which I will refer is a private letter, which contains an account of all that was discovered in the Inquisition, by one who made a personal visit to it.

"I visited lately the works going on in the subterranean vaults of the Holy Office, and was not a little horrified at what I saw with my own eyes, and held in my own hands.

"Though I have been familiar with everything in and about Rome for a quarter of a century, I confess I never had any curiosity to visit the Inquisition, taking it for granted that everything was carried on there fairly and honestly, as I was led to believe by people worthy, in other respects, of implicit truth. Besides, the place itself is out of the beaten track of all strangers, and in a sort of *cul de sac* behind St. Peter's, where it naturally retired to perform its blushing operations, and 'do good by stealth.' I was struck with the outward appearance of civilization and comfort displayed by the building, which owes its erection to Pius IV., author of the last creed; but, on entering, the real character of the concern was no longer dissimulated. A range of strongly-barred prisons formed the ground-floor of a quadrangular court, and these dark and damp receptacles I found were only the preliminary stage of probation, intended for newcomers as yet uninitiated into the Eleusinian mysteries of the establishment. Entering a passage to the left, you arrive at a smaller courtyard, where a triple row of small barred dungeons rises from the soil upwards, somewhat after the outward look of a three-decker, 'accommodating' about sixty prisoners. These

barred cages must have been often fully manned, for there is a supplementary row constructed at the back of the quadrangle, on the ground-floor, which faces a large garden. All these cellular contrivances have strong iron rings let into the masonry, and in some there is a large stone firmly imbedded in the centre, with a similar massive ring. Numerous inscriptions, dated centuries back, are dimly legible on the admission of light, the general tenor being assertion of innocence: '*Iddio ci liberi di lingua calumniatrice,*' '*Io domenico Gazzoli vissi qui anni 18,*' '*Calumniatores mendaces exterminabuntur.*' I read another somewhat longer, the drift of which is, 'The caprice or wickedness of man cannot exclude me from thy church, O Christ, my only hope.' The officer in charge led me down to where the men were digging in the vaults below; they had cleared a downward flight of steps, which was choked up with old rubbish, and had come to a series of dungeons under the vaults, deeper still, and which immediately brought to my mind the prisons of the Doge, under the canal of the Bridge of Sighs, at Venice, only that here there was a surpassing horror. I saw imbedded in old masonry, unsymmetrically arranged, five skeletons in various recesses, and the clearance had only just begun: the period of their insertion in this spot must have been more than a century and a half. From another vault, full of skulls and scattered human remains, there was a shaft, about four feet square, ascending perpendicularly to the first floor of the building, and ending in a passage off the hall of the chancery, where a trap-door lay between the tribunal and the way into a suite of rooms destined for one of the officials. The object of this shaft could admit of but one surmise. The ground of the vault was made up of decayed animal matter, a lump of which held imbedded in it a long, silken lock of hair, as I found by personal examination, as it was shovelled up from below. Why or wherefore, with a large space of vacant ground lying outside the structure, this charnel-house should be contrived under the dwelling, passes my ken. But that is not all; there are two large subterranean limekilns, if I may so call them, shaped like a bee-hive, in masonry, filled with layers of calcined bones, forming the substratum of two other chambers on the ground-floor, in the immediate vicinity of the very mysterious

shaft above mentioned. I know not what interest you may attach to what looks like a chapter from Mrs. Radcliffe, but had I not the evidence of my own senses, I would never have dreamt of such appearances in a prison of the Holy Office; being thoroughly sick of the nonsense that has, for years, been put forth on that topic by partisan pens. But here the thing will become serious, for to-morrow the whole population of Rome is publicly invited by the authorities to come and see with their own eyes one of the results of entrusting power to clerical hands. Libels on the clergy have been manifold during the last four months, and have done their work among the masses. But mere talk is nothing to the actual view of realities.

“ ‘Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.’ ”

“The archives (wanting the very recent ones only) have been overhauled, and a selection will be forthwith published. The cases are of the most intense interest, reaching from Galileo’s time down to modern days; and here most disgraceful letters from the Sardinian and Neapolitan courts, including a choice correspondence from the Duke of Modena, will be given verbatim, *in extenso*. Latterly the concern had become almost exclusively political, and only busied itself with Carbonari and Freemasons, under which terms every aspirant after a constitutional form of government was thought fair game, and hunted out *secundum artem*.”—Correspondent of *Daily News*.

Many of the Romans, it is stated on other authority, visited the scene, and were pained and shocked as they read the various complaining and sorrowful inscriptions which covered the walls; and as they noticed the various provisions for secret murder, they exclaimed, “Is this the Christian faith?”

No wonder that such a question should be asked. One wonders how, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whose whole life was beneficence, and love, and mercy, whose every doctrine breathes goodness and tenderness, such horrid cruelties should be perpetrated against any, much more against the saints of the Most High. One of the most awful mysteries of this mysterious world is, that in such a name, and under the pretence of such auspices, and with the book that is all light, and love, and truth in their

possession, crimes should have been committed by its professed believers which shock humanity and cry to heaven for vengeance. In the Gospel and around the cross, "mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other;" but in Rome and around the Vatican it may truly be said, that "cruelty and murder have met together, rapine and bloodshed have embraced and kissed each other."

Yet awful as such facts are, they are, I believe, but the beginning of these terrible disclosures. Another fact has come out, no less startling than some which I have stated. It appears that the secretary of the Inquisition has escaped from the power of those who placed him there, and is preparing to publish in France documents which they say will startle all Europe.

"The long promised assault on the ancient doctrines of the Romish Church is announced for Saturday next, and you may judge with what interest the conference is looked forward to by all classes. The work of the Abbate Leone is now completed, and will be read and commented on in a public *séance*. It is anticipated that his apparition as preacher of a new doctrine will cause more emotion than any event of the kind since the days of Luther. The Catholic world is ripe for a reform, and anything presenting the appearance of a just and salutary change will be eagerly caught at. The history of Leone is curious and interesting. He is of a good Roman family, and was from his earliest youth devoted to solitude and study. Being an orphan from his childhood, he was allowed to follow the bent of his own inclinations, and entered the church at the age of nineteen. He then became attached to the Pope as librarian, and for fifteen years he never set his foot outside the Vatican, living entirely in the section of theology, belonging to the library of the little closet close beside it, where he slept. His whole time was thus devoted to the research of ancient authors; and he has been known to spend three days and nights without sleep in poring over some half-defaced manuscript, or in interpreting some correspondence in ciphers, in which science he has become a perfect adept. It was thus that he became acquainted with all the secret machinations of the Church, and with all the intrigues by which she has maintained to this hour such unbounded influence over the kingdoms

of Europe which still own her sway. The Abbate became terrified at the discovery of the vast system of corruption of which fate had made him an abettor—he hastened to abjure his vows and fly from Rome. He next took up his abode at Turin, in order to examine with attention the system upon which the Jesuits were then acting. Two attempts to murder him by poison caused him to come to Paris about six months ago. He has ever since that time been employed in finishing the work which is to lay the foundation of a new form of religion, or rather of a practical theory, by which the Gospel is to be displayed in action as well as in words.”

I have thus then confined your attention to one prediction declared in this chapter, that at the time of the consumption of Babylon there should be found and exposed in her the proofs and traces of her multiplied and sanguinary crimes. I think that the parallelism drawn between this chapter and the facts I related in last lecture, and between these verses and the mere abstract of facts which I have given in this, present together the highest probability that the position I have endeavoured to support, viz. that great Babylon with her cruelties and crimes is coming into sight before man and into remembrance before God, is alike correct and significant. We are now coming under the seventh vial more or less rapidly. We stand at the commencement of judgments which will shake all the earth, but also usher in the millennial glory in its blessedness and beauty.

My first desire in these observations is, to turn your eyes to the signs of the times. Our Lord blames the Pharisees for not distinguishing them; for he says, “When it is evening ye say, We shall have fair weather, for the sky is red; and in the morning ye say, It will be foul weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the faces of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” We, too, may be guilty of the like apathy and neglect. Let us then watch. The hour of the Redeemer’s advent no man can specify, nor can any one declare the day of the commencement of millennial glory,—this is beyond our vision; but the signs of the dawn of the latter, the sounds of the footstep of the former, every reader of the Bible is warned to note and listen to, to ponder, and patiently

hope for. Surely, if moral confusion in the social atmosphere of nations, and physical derangement in the atmosphere we breathe, show that God is rising out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth, it is impossible to be indifferent. Surely, blessed are they who, in such a crisis, wait and look and pray, and amid such awful events, and deepening shadows, and distress of nations, and men's hearts failing them for fear of what is coming on the earth, walk closer with God, and seek their safety under the covert of his wings.

Another object I have aimed at in these two last lectures has been to show you the external evidence of the truth of the word of God. Events are gathering round it like witnesses waiting to attest it — facts are coming on the world's stage, crowding together in order to fulfil its predictions; all things and men — dynasties and kings — pestilence and war, are giving utterance to the cry loud and piercing, till sceptics listen — “Thy word, O God, is truth.” The occurrences of every day are fulfilling the prophecies of every century, and history is recording prophecies in their ultimate issues on its tablets. Year after year the evidence becomes brighter as the drama thickens, that this blessed book has God for its author, and truth for its matter. St. John wrote the prediction — Europe cries aloud, “It is done.” The nineteenth century is filling up the outline sketched in the first.

My third design has been to enable you to see God yet more vividly in the world. Dynasties have their missions, and now unconsciously fulfil them — revolutions their time, their lessons and their use, though their agents suspect it not; all events and facts and phenomena — all flashes and convulsions and tumults, are the gleams of the glory of God as he passeth by. He is himself arranging or controlling them; he sits above the floods; he determines the rise and fall of all; he is as truly present at Rome at this moment, as he was amid the host of Sennacherib, or when he humbled the proud monarch of Babylon, or when he thundered from Sinai or shone in the burning bush: mountains still quake — bushes still burn — kings are still struck down. Those events rapidly succeeding each other at Rome are stages and chapters in that history which God is writing on the earth; they are a part of that glorious procession which prophets saw from

afar and proclaimed to be sure as the east and west, and fixed as the nadir and zenith. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ."

It has also been my object and desire to encourage myself and you by the prospect of the glories of the latter day. The downfall of Babylon is immediately preliminary to the glories of the latter day. The angels in heaven are represented as rejoicing at its ruin, and the saints as praising God for the terrible catastrophe. It has been the prayer of believers in their homes, and of sufferers in the flames, for a thousand years, that God would hasten the destruction of that system which has hallowed ignorance, calling it "the mother of devotion," and consecrated cruelty as if it were mercy; which has built inquisitions, evangelized with the sword, plundered the widow and raised cathedrals with the spoils, and chanted at the close her *Te Deums*, as if glorifying God and fulfilling the mission of the Gospel to mankind. I believe that her last judgments have overtaken her, that the might of the last hour of Babylon is upon her; that she is drinking now of the first drops of the cup of the fierceness of God's great wrath: and if the beginning be so bitter, what must the end be? If angels, apostles, and martyrs rejoice over her fall in heaven—if God command his people to rejoice at her ruin on earth, surely it cannot be unscriptural, or unedifying, to proclaim the fact that her days are numbered, and that the hour of her judgment is come.

My last design is to lead you, amidst the gathering clouds of the sky above, and amidst the accumulating judgments of the earth below, to make sure that you have fled to that glorious refuge of which Christ is the centre, the circumference, the roof, the walls, the foundation; in which no tribulation shall scathe you, nor judgment overtake you. Let the precious blood of the Lamb be realized by you all as it never was realized before, as the only element of reconciliation and of peace. When the Israelite of old fled into the city of refuge, and heard the rush of the wing of the destroying angel as he swept through the street in which he dwelt, that Israelite, no doubt, trembled and feared, but the blood was on the threshold and the angel dared not enter to destroy, not because the individual's confidence was

great, but because the blood of the Lamb upon the threshold was all-sufficient; we may tremble, fear, doubt, question—sinful as this is—but, blessed be God, our safety from judgment reposes, not upon the strength of our faith, but upon the preciousness of that blood which the Spirit of God has sprinkled upon our hearts. My dear friends, have you fled to that refuge? Is vital religion your great concern? Is real, spiritual prayer your constant and your daily resource? Is God's glory the great object of your life? Is God's word your only directory? Is the Holy Spirit of God your only sanctifier? Let me ask you, in one word, are you Christians?—living, believing, confiding, praying, living Christians? Churchmen will be scattered to the winds; Dissenters will be ground to powder; sectarians of all sorts will be utterly crushed; but they whose robe is the righteousness of Emmanuel—whose shelter is the blood of the Lamb—whose hope is in his word, are as safe as if the everlasting hills were around them, and the broad shield of omnipotence spread over them. I ask you again, my dear friends, are you the people of God? Do not put off a moment at such a crisis; you know not what judgments are on the wing; you know not what events may be at our very doors. The whole air is charged with plague and war and battle. The warning has been sounded, "Prepare to meet thy God;" prepare by living with God, by living near to him—by rising above things seen—by delighting in his word, and doing his will and work—by praying for his peace to keep you, his blessing to embosom you, and finally, his glory to receive you. May his righteousness be our shelter! May his blood be our common and our exclusive trust! May we be found in him when the judgment comes; and when Antichrist and they that are his shall be cast like a millstone into the depths of the unsounded sea, may we, and all that are near and dear to us, meet together before the throne to part no more. The Lord add his blessing, and forgive the imperfections of speaking and hearing, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

P. S.—The following are two of the many significant documents which have lately issued from Rome. The first is published by the *Circole Popolare*:—

“Avidity of power, the foolish ambition of a small and puerile mind, weighed more with you than the love of the people and the sentiments of humanity. And what is now most apparent in you? Is it not love of rule and unmeasured desire of temporal power? Your natural disposition and character are now plain to the whole world. We can afford to smile, in these days, at words such as the right of sovereignty inherent in the apostolic chair, and in the holy Roman Church. Every one knows that the apostles had no sovereignty; and no one who calls himself a successor of the apostles can have any either. That a *chair* should have such a sovereignty is a most strange thing, and reminds us of the fable where Jove gives a log to be king of the frogs. This language cannot be borne. Let us see if any such right of sovereignty belongs to the Church. We deny it, in the words of the Testament of its Divine Founder. If he has said, and left it in writing, that he, the true Head of this Church, would have no kingdom of this world, it comes of sequence that no imitator or follower of his can claim any such right in his name. Christ, whom we worship, warned his disciples not to assume to themselves any title of dominion over the people, as this was the prerogative of the kings of the Gentiles, who, in order to exercise authority over them, are called benefactors; ‘But ye,’ he said, ‘shall not be so.’ (Luke xxii. 25, 26.) You would be king, in order to receive tribute from your people; and the more they paid you, the more you called them your most dear children. Have you ever read, in the Gospel of St. Matthew, the dialogue between Jesus Christ and St. Peter? You will find it at chapter xvii. 25. These are the words: — ‘When he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.’ This proves that children and subjects are not one. How, then, dare you, calling yourself the Vicar of Christ, overthrow the Gospel, and make us both subjects and sons? And this you pretend to do by the power of the Church. You have changed this word Church to make it stand for ambition and cupidity. While the Church was purely Chris-

tian, she had no other possessions than those of religion — faith and the Spirit of the Lord. Since she became Popish (*papista*) she no more heeded these heavenly treasures, but turned her mind to worldly lusts, and became the slave of riches and of power. If we were not able to distinguish between Church and Religion, we should be led to believe that Religion herself had fallen from her own teaching, since in the Church we see so many contradictions that we cannot tell whether it is the Church of Christ or his adversary. And, amongst other things, we happen to know what is the true meaning of this word Church, which you and your acolytes repeat to us at every moment. Our parish priest, we remember, used to teach us in the Catechism, that Church means an assembly or congregation of believers; and since we are the believers, who assemble ourselves, so we thought that we were, properly speaking, the Roman Church, which is holy if we are holy, and apostolic if we have the doctrine and spirit of the apostles. What the priests are, we are also taught—viz. elders and ministers of this church, having a chief who is called a Bishop, that is, a president or inspector. Now, then, who shall dare to take from Christian people the titles and the privileges of the Christian Church? The priests, forsooth, and their inspector! If so, we, the Church, will punish them for this their arrogance, and with good reason will deprive them of the exercise of their ministry, calling others to their place, and doing as our fathers did, excommunicating the unruly, be they priests or bishops. It is our duty to watch over the rights of our Church, and the bishops and priests must carry out our will. If our fathers granted to the chief priest of Rome the privilege of governing the society, we by the same right can deprive him of it. The sister churches of France, of Austria, and of Spain may, for the same reason, turn their chief priests into a king, an emperor, or a president, if they choose; we do not meddle with their affairs, and we demand that they should leave us alone.

“To you who, dethroned by the inscrutable providence of God, persist still in raising such an uproar, we will submit some considerations, old and new, as reasons for what has occurred. First—Because, after the manner of kings, you have abused the people, by oppressing them and ill-using them, and have done

this, moreover, in the name of St. Peter and of Christ. Second — Because, in the government of this realm, bishops and priests were employed, so that the Church, instead of having good ministers to watch over the Christian flock, was neglected and overlooked; the government monopolised all the talent, while the inferior priests were entrusted with the care of the Church. The government was conducted by court intrigue, and arts and tricks of cabinets — the Church taught false doctrines and a superstitious worship. The first care was given to the heaping up of gold and silver, but none bestowed to giving to the Church the truths of the word of God. Hence, activity and vigilance amongst cardinals and prelates — idleness and carelessness amongst mass-sayers. The one given up to luxury and gluttony, the others to want and misery. * * *

“We hold the religion of Christ dear, because we believe it to be true, saving, and holy. But this religion, which is none other than faith in Christ, by which we are justified before God and forgiven all our sins, can well exist without bishops and priests. This religion of faith, professed by many persons in all parts of the world, constitutes that invisible Church of believers which is universal, whose head and pontiff and priest is and can only be Jesus Christ. To every man who belongs to this Church appertain all the great promises which we read in the Gospel. In this Church there is neither hierarchy, nor aristocracy, but only God and people, and Christ the mediator and intercessor. This invisible and spiritual Church does not prevent the existence of another Church, visible and material, which is divided into as many fractions as there are nations and languages; and these again are subdivided into smaller fractions; and it is possible for one country to contain many Churches, in the liberty which every man has to choose that which best suits him. * * *

“Who is the bishop of the Church of the Waldenses, in the kingdom of Piedmont? No one. Yet it is a Christian Church, full of fervour, established there at the end of the eleventh century, and which, after most cruel persecution, and slaughter and massacre, presents to us at this moment a body of 24,000 believers. * * *

“Observe, that those who were formerly asleep are now awake;

and those on whom you formerly imposed, no longer believe what you say. When you quitted Rome, the Bible entered it—the Bible, so long persecuted by Popes. Both the Gospel of Christ and the holy letters of the Apostles, faithfully translated into Italian, are now in the hands of the people, who read them, and *there they find neither Popery nor Pope*. Take care that you do not meet with the same fate in Italy which your predecessors met with out of it, who, aiming at too much, lost all. The men who in February last deprived you of temporal power intended to better your condition in spiritual things. From the 30th of April, up to this day, you have laid aside every pledge, broken all friendship, and violated every law, by presenting yourself before the walls of Rome amidst muskets and cannons; and you have announced to this city your return, your solemn ingress, with shells and incendiary violence, in the midst of the dead and wounded. Is this the duty of a bishop?—this the return amongst us of the pretended vicar of Jesus Christ? Would he retain such a vicar at his post?—should the Church of Rome receive such a bishop? * * *

“In vain do you exaggerate the disorders of this our government, and with foul language descend to words of contumely, calling Rome ‘a den of raging beasts,’ and those who inhabit it, ‘apostates, heretics, teachers of Communism and Socialism, who endeavour to disseminate pestiferous error of all kinds, to corrupt the heart and the mind of all men.’ * * *

“To apostatize from you, and to return to Jesus Christ and his Apostles, is that which we desire for ourselves and for our children; and if these are the errors which ‘corrupt the heart and the mind of all men,’ blessed are we who from such error are able to learn truth, and from such darkness to receive light. ‘But woe unto you, hypocrites and pharisees, who call evil good, and good evil—who call light darkness, and darkness light.’ * * *

“Giovanni Mastai, how long will you insult your country, and she bear with you? You, allied to kings in order to betray the people; bound in special amity to the Neapolitan Bourbon, to learn from him how to oppress every generous soul, and to extinguish in the sons of Italy every noble sentiment. Oh, senseless

we ! that we should ever have believed you, ever have applauded your feigned promises and ephemeral concessions, to find ourselves now deluded in our hopes, and cheated of our happiness ! If you appeal to the religion of the canons, we stand by the holy religion of the Gospel : you belie it,—we are faithful to God and to his Christ. Yes, we believe in the Christ of God, and our faith daily increases on comparing his doctrine with our practice. The more we disbelieve you, the more we are led to see that we ought to believe him ! He is the free Saviour of his people ; you, an oppressor and a destroyer. He taught us to bless those who curse, and to do good to those who hate us, to pray for those who spitefully use us and persecute us. (Matt. v. 44.) He was given by God not to condemn the world, but that the world by him might be saved. (John iii. 17.) He declares that he is not come to destroy, but to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke xix. 10.) You began by cursing those who, to the last, had blessed you ; by hating those who had done you good, and by spitefully using and persecuting those who had prayed for you. You, who alone might have saved our country, and redeemed it from its lost condition, have joined yourself to her enemies to condemn and to destroy her.”

PROTEST OF ITALIAN RESIDENTS IN LONDON AGAINST POPERY.

“Last evening, August 5, 1849, a meeting of Italians resident in the metropolis was held at the Western Literary Institution, Leicester-square, ‘for the discussion of the religious questions involved in the present state of Italy, and of urging the Italian people to protest no longer against the Pope merely, but against the system of Popery itself.’ The proceedings were conducted according to the rules of public meetings in Italy, and were throughout of the most remarkable character. The speakers addressed the audience in the Italian language. The ladies, of whom a large number were present, took an active part in the discussion of the questions brought under consideration, many of them rising to make observations on the respective addresses. Signor G. T. Vignati took the chair, and the meeting was addressed by the Cavalier Fenzi, Signor Raffaello di Roma, Pro-

fessor Gabriele Rosetti, Signor Boccasoli, Signor Sussanni, and other gentlemen. Signor Mappai thought it was no longer of any use to oppose the Pope as an individual or as a temporal prince, for he believed that the whole system of Roman Catholicism tended to degrade the people, and obstruct the progress of their political independence. They wished to be unfettered in their acknowledgment of 'one faith, one Lord, one baptism.' In fact, they wanted to get rid of the whole political machinery of the Church of Rome. Signor Mappai enlarged upon these topics amidst constant interruptions. So great indeed was the disturbance, that the police were frequently called in to quell it. Several gentlemen (zealous Roman Catholics and advocates of the present system) were forcibly expelled. In the midst of the confusion the following resolution was adopted:—"That this meeting, highly condemning as tyrannical, infamous, anti-evangelical, and impious, the conduct of Pope Pius IX., invites all the Italian patriots to follow the true Religion of Jesus Christ, as followed by their ancestors, throwing aside their Papal Church, which is conspiring against the liberties of the people."—A vote of thanks to the chairman closed the proceedings. This is certainly not one of the least significant of the 'signs of the times.'"

Thus events thicken; the foundations of Babylon are being undermined, freedom is finding access to its dungeons, and its own children, weary with their bondage and its crimes, are rising up against her.

LECTURE XX.

SPIRITUAL DEATH.

"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."—
REV. iii. 1.

HAD we to appear at the judgment-seat, and to receive the sentence of doom from the lips of an imperfect and erring man, we could have little encouragement to seek by well-doing, glory, honour, and immortality. We take up such misapprehensions of the actions and motives of other men; we are so liable to be deceived by outward appearances, and thence to deduce erroneous conclusions, — that we all feel convinced that our lives never can be judged correctly, nor our actions justly weighed, nor our appropriate condition in eternity assigned us, by any one who has not the omniscience of Godhead to discriminate and weigh, and the sympathies of manhood to feel and to commiserate. The perplexed woof of human life in its simplest estate is composed of threads so chequered and intermixed, that none but he unto whom the essence and the structure of all that constitutes the moral and the physical world are thoroughly open, can separate the good from the bad, and determine what is fit to be burned and what is worthy of being preserved. What consolation ought it then to administer to them who have chosen that better part, that Christ their Saviour, who is soon to be their judge, needs not to be told what is in man, because unto him all hearts are open and all desires known — that he is by them to strengthen their good resolutions, and to assist their weak attempts to serve him—that the smallest and most hidden act of charity done to a believer, the faintest aspiration after a holy life, shall receive from him by grace the appropriate blessing and reward. His assertion of himself is, "I know thy works." Though this is addressed

to the moderator and bishop of the Church of Sardis, yet is it meant for the ear of every bishop also in the Church of Scotland, and in every Church; yea, for all men and for all churches.

Could our eyes be opened this day as were the eyes of Elisha's servant, could the veil that intercepts the spiritual world from our view be for a moment withdrawn, we should see that the Lord of Glory was bending over his flock with a brother's eye, and yet with Godhead's intention, and watching the motions of every heart, and hearing the accents of every psalm, and the words of every prayer: and, alas! he is also privy to every thought you harbour about earth and forbidden things; and while he hears and abundantly blesses the needy's humble supplication, he is vexed with, and will assuredly punish the callousness of them who forget that they are in the presence of the living God. To the child of God this presence and perfect knowledge of Christ ought to afford the strongest comfort; while to you who make the house of God little else than a convenient place for helping you to kill an hour or two you cannot otherwise dispose of, it ought to impress the most solemn fears of your fate at that day, when the secrets of the closest heart shall be laid bare and unmasked in the presence of a deeply interested universe.

But the expression, "I know thy works," I would view in the moral import of the words. It is as if he has said, When I blame thee and lay before thee thy deficiencies, when I tell thee of thy carelessness and inattention, do not suppose that I entirely overlook the good deeds you may have done. I know them all; I have estimated them all; I have weighed them in the balance, and have found them yet wanting. In this passage there is a decided recognition of something in its way good still remaining among men; there is an admission on the part of the unerring God, that in man there are yet some expiring embers of that fire which came at the first from heaven's altars, some fragments of that glorious edifice which Adam's breast presented in its unfallen condition. Christ does not condemn man as if he were in all his actions as impure, in all his words as untrue, and in all his thoughts as corrupted, as the devil endeavours to make them; for he can yet appreciate in man some of the scattered flowers of the crown that fell from his head, which time hath not utterly

withered, which the breath of hell hath not utterly blasted. We have indeed but to open our eyes, and we cannot fail to discern in the human race many traits which give strong but melancholy testimony to the vastness of the loss which sin hath brought upon it, and to the fact that a shred or two of its pristine perfection still remain. When we look around among the world's families, and in the circuit of our observation fix our attention on some cottage in our native land, shall we not find therein a mother exhausting her mind in thought, and her frame in exertions to provide for the health and the happiness of the babe that hangs at her breast? Is there no remnant of moral healthiness in the ardency of maternal tenderness? Is there no excellence most commendable in the affection which enables her to meet death in his worst shape rather than see her little one suffer, or hear its cry for protection, and not rush to its aid? Is there no fragment of Adam's greatness in the toils and travails which an affectionate son willingly encounters to soften the declining years of a parent most esteemed? Is there nothing commendable in his heart who arms himself with the buckler and the spear, and stands in the ranks upon the battle-field, that the foeman's efforts to enslave his country may be repelled, and that the land that gave him birth may bequeath freedom as its common air unto those that are born after him? Is there no excellence in the reciprocities of friendship—nothing worthy of praise in the devotedness of ancient men, when the fate of a relation, or a friend, or a native land, demanded its deepest outgoings? Yes; in all these instances—and many more could be added—there is much entitled to commendation—there is much that the Saviour calls good; for, "If, ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

There are strong traces of harmony and beauty still to be discovered alike in the moral and in the physical creation: the rose has its beauty and its fragrance, and maternal affection has yet its strength and its loveliness; the oak has its majesty and shade, and the patriot is not yet deprived of his mental greatness and his protecting power. The body of man is not divested of all its comeliness, nor is his mind of all its manliness; and the form of

woman has still a portion of its pristine grace, and her mind has still a remnant of its pristine sensibility: there are spots of barrenness and landscapes like Eden on the surface of the earth; and on the aspect of the family of Adam there is the deformity of vice, and there is something, too, of the fruitfulness of virtue. I wish to enter the discussion with my fellow-men fairly accoutred; I wish them to possess the ground they can honestly claim, and the weapons they can fairly wield. It is not therefore useful, it is not judicious, in depicting the condition of man, to strip him of all he boasts of, and to charge him with the blackest crimes in their highest degrees, and with a heart corrupt to the core, desperately wicked, as it verily is, and with conduct unrelieved by a single virtue, and imaginations unenlightened by a single ray of light! Poor man! grant him all those external though imperfect moralities which bubble in perpetual and gay succession from the thousand streams of human occupation. Give him, in charity give him, his deeds of heroic note, his ancient chivalry, marked with unparalleled devotedness in its time, his magnanimity, his high sense of honour, and his fair dealings and his comely politeness. My brother, I do cheerfully give thee all these, and the praise they merit, and would I could give thee more. And why? Because Christ concedes these—because his apostles refuse them not—because common observation notes, and common feeling commends them all.

Yet lackest thou one thing, the want of which may and must hurl the man with his vaunted honours, and the hero with his heroic bravery, and the mother with her warm affection, to the blackness of darkness for ever. That one thing is the mainspring of true and acceptable holiness—a new heart which the love of God gives birth to, and which love to God maintains in healthy action, and enableth at its very pulse to send around it the life-blood streams that preserve society from corruption, and the earth we inhabit from universal ruin.

Christ tells the Sardinian bishop in the text, that with all these acquirements (for these are the feats that give one a name, and the reputation of a good and a social person,) he had nevertheless but “a name to live by, and was dead.” Now what is it to have a name to live by? It is just to have all the appearance of a true Christian, but none of the reality. It is just to be *most*

punctual in attendance on the preached word, most regularly seen at the sacramental table, and apparently most deeply alive to all the holy exercises which diffuse the aroma and the atmosphere of holiness. The Pharisees of olden days had a name, and a mighty name to live by. A Jew would have risked his eternal felicity on the reality of *his* Gamaliel's godliness. Yet were these men hollow at heart, and corrupt to the core, as the grave that hath the rose and the myrtle on its breast, but corruption, and decay, and dead men's bones within. The man who has the name to live by to the outward eye, seems to savour as remarkably of heaven, and of its holy character, as the man who has within his bosom the jewel of great price. He presents unto all eyes the goodly sight of walking to Zion with his family around him, with the well-kept Bible in his hand; his look is lifted up to the temple spires, and his steps seem staid and firm through the influence of faith and hope and assured confidence. He engages, to all appearance, as devoutly in prayer as the heavenliest member of the flock; and his voice is heard in praise as conspicuous as his whose heart is tuned by the finger of God and filled with the breath of heaven. But, alas! the garb is assumed for outward show, put on and put off with his Sunday's coat, and as much a part of himself. He is the counterfeit coin that deceives the unwary, but which is eventually detected and exposed by him who made the true substance at the first, and hath the die and the mould that gave it all its being. The bad bank-note seems to unskilled men as beautiful, as real, and as valuable as the best the bank can afford; but when it is presented at the judgment-day, and the payment of its superscription, and its demand, "Lord, open," claimed from God, it will be exposed, condemned, and rejected, as worthless trash and fit only to be burned. But more than this, it generally comes to pass that the merely nominal Christian is stripped of his borrowed plumes even in this life. Let the fire of persecution once again break forth from its smouldering ashes, let the appliances of strong temptation kindle up within the mere professor's bosom, and the artificial fabric will give way, the hay, and the straw, and the stubble will be burned up, and the naked deformity of the man come out with its hideous lineaments.

Rest assured, my dear brethren, that vital Christianity alone can withstand either the common temptations of the devil and the world and the flesh, or those convulsions, and changes, and unsparing disasters, which in these momentous times scorch, if they go not to consume, the most distant corners of Christendom. The coloured brass, the alloyed metal, will not stand you in stead ; gold alone, that which Christ hath to sell and for nothing, will come forth from the furnace purer than when it entered in. None but those who have Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego's faith and holiness, can expect Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego's security. The lions will shut their ravenous mouth, and refuse to injure a limb of him that belongs unto Jesus ; and the flames of the seven times heated furnace will play around him in their ascent to heaven, and withal refuse to singe a hair of his head, or the weakest part of his hosen and homely garments. There is a power and a permanency in real and vital godliness which does denude consuming Time of his action, temptation of its power, and persecution of its grim and ghastly features.

The nominal Christian is forced to have recourse to a thousand shifts to prevent the world's eye from detecting the mask that lends his naturally frightful aspect all its attractiveness, and gives him his currency and character in society. Like certain tyrants of this world, he must adjust his habiliments before he mingle with mankind ; and even when he is engaged in the varied duties of sacred or common occupation, he must habituate his movements to a system of cautious restraint, and look upon the men that seem to possess more than common penetration with a scowling and suspicious eye. His fate in society he well knows may be sealed by the evolution of a moment, by a word, by an act, by a thousand things which must be carefully attempered before he can allow them to come under the review of his fellow-men. What a miserable life ! How expensive is hypocrisy ! Verily, this laboured and severely sustained homage, which vice offers up to virtue, is worse of attainment than religion's straitest duties. This cloak, so scanty in dimensions, so liable at the impulse of a breath to disclose its wearer's deformity, so prickly at all hours and at all places, is in this matter alone more troublesome and costly than the very mantle of holiness, which, like

Elijah's, is ready to descend from the upper Church on all disposed to receive it. As *truth* alone in language is simple, and more enduring than *falsehood*, so *reality*, its counterpart in the conduct is simpler, and more enduring than the fairest and the best sustained semblance even in the life. The actor who personates a king for a brief hour upon the stage, is no farther removed from the crowned monarch of the land in point of retinue, possessions, prospects, and true superiority, than is the hypocrite from the saint, whose bosom is the temple of the Majesty of Heaven, whose ministering servants are the spirits that surround the throne, whose heart is the sanctified centre of the virtues, holiness and piety, which there brighten by their busy play the night of our earthly pilgrimage. A name to live by! This is, indeed, a paltry possession; it is an unmanly, and what is worse, it is a most unchristian livelihood.

In those of you who are in this condition I do solemnly charge home forgery on the Majesty of Heaven; I do charge you with high treason against the Holy One of Israel. You affix the stamp of heaven to the documents of hell, you write the signature and superscription of the great "I AM" upon the base metal which Satan forges and commissions you to circulate, that fellow-men may awake from the grave, and find the riches they hoarded so intensely to be but the riches of corruption, and that in heaven alone, of all creation, they have no treasures. The merchants, and the bankers, and the monied men, prosecute and drag to an ignominious punishment the man who will forge upon them, and circulate as their bills and notes the mere imitations of them! Will you punish the man who will employ your name and credit to give currency to a useless rag, and will the God and Judge of all allow men to give currency and rank to their own vile acts and practices, and unrenewed character, by skilfully covering all with the studied imitation of the characters of heaven? If the offender against the name and credit of a worm of the dust meets punishment in the course of retributive justice here, most assuredly the man who offends, by his hypocrisy, against the name of the Eternal shall die a more awful and lasting death, even the second death.

I desire to place the matter in its true light and just bearing.

Compare the requirements, rewards, and penalties of heaven with those of man, in the moments of their cool and unprejudiced operation, and you will find that the latter minister the strongest arguments to the fairness of the former. I believe that many men are nominal Christians from want of reflection, and I fear this class is exceedingly numerous, and therefore I wish to set forth the subject in as many of the universalities of its application as your time will allow. What would you say of that soldier's honesty, to say nothing of his intrepidity, who should wear the king's uniform, and bear the king's sword, and receive the king's pay, and meanwhile harbour in his bosom the most disloyal and treasonable thoughts; one, who should regulate his actions by the directions and wishes of that power which was the stoutest enemy of his nation?

All of you are animated with the spirit that would reprobate such nefarious treachery. But why do ye allow this spirit of reprobation to halt here? Have ye not professed to be soldiers of the King of heaven at the baptismal font? Have ye not taken the solemn sacrament, by which, and at which, ye did pledge yourselves to fight manfully for God and for his Christ, against the devil and the world and the flesh? Do you not receive the rich bounty of God in the air you breathe, in the bread you eat, in the freedom you are born to, in the unfailing sustentation of his gracious providence? Yet, will ye give your best affection to the world, the flesh, and the devil; the three-fold dominion ye were called to subdue? Will ye wrap around you the banner of the Lord of Hosts, and join the ranks of its deadliest opponents? Will you use the strength that heaven gives to your bones, to dethrone Christ, and to exalt Belial? If ye forget the feeling of the champion of the Cross, call to your aid the high-toned chivalry of the human warrior, and let this world's habits, in some of their developments at least, as well as its mammon, become your friends. Praise not the hero on the battle-field of earth, and equally praise the coward on the battle-field of grace. Some of you will say, We are willing, and not a little efficient, soldiers of Christ. We contribute our efforts and our means to advance his kingdom, by supporting Missionary and Bible Societies. So far is well; but beware of deluding your own selves:

there is a courage of sympathy no more allied to true courage than absolute cowardice. The veriest coward is often hurried to the foe amid the trumpet blast and the rapidity of onset, without once feeling an emotion of loyalty, zeal, or genuine patriotism. The pressure of his fellows, and the confusion of the moment, are the sole incentives to his attack and rapid charge. And so in the Church, the fervent eloquence of the preacher, the catching piety of neighbours and companions, may hurry on a languid and un-renewed heart to acts of Christian sacrifice and suffering to which it would otherwise be a stranger. The avowed infidel will not give his assent to Christian institutions—the open profligate will be as reluctant. None will, but the real and renewed disciple of Jesus, or the nominal disciple who has but a name to live by. In the one rank, or in the other, you must stand.

The Lord Jesus, the great Bishop of the Church, sums up the record of the Sardian minister's character with the impressive words, "and art dead." With all his social feelings, with all his virtues, with all his well-sustained semblance of Christianity, Christ pronounces him dead. Men cannot pierce the breast and scan the condition of the soul; they cannot tell the true state each of his own heart: how much less the condition of another! We can judge of men's hearts solely by their fruits; and even in this case, the tints are so fine, that we often miss or mistake them. But Christ hath the eyes of fire, that can penetrate the innermost chambers of imagery, and view the heart of man in all its attitudes and in all its pulses.

Now what is the nature of this death in which the Sardian Church and bishop are declared to be, in which all mankind are also standing in their unquickened and un-renewed state? The other testimonies of Scripture are briefly these: (Eph. iii. 5,) "Dead in trespasses and sins;" (2 Cor. v. 14,) "If one died for all, then were all dead;" (1 Tim. v. 6,) "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she yet liveth." All these remarkable and striking passages characterise one state of man's existence by the word death. Let us then address ourselves to the duty of opening up and defining this feature in man; and for this purpose let us ascend the course of ages till we arrive at the sentence pronounced on the first progenitor of man. Remember, or rather

picture to your minds, the fair fields of ancient Eden — its attempered sun by day, and its spangled firmament by night — its undying flowers and its unfading fruits — its limpid streams and its air ever fresh and supportive of a healthy and prolonged existence. In the midst of this happy combination of physical delights, picture to yourselves Adam, the lord and master of them all, mighty in all that constitutes the dignity of his being. His intellect could rise from earth to heaven, and trace throughout the chain that stretches upward from the reptile of the dust to the loftiest comprehensible intelligence. God was then his Father, his delight, and the beginning, the current, and end of all his thoughts; and if the fair creature that hung about him, like the ivy on the oak, occupied his thoughts at any time, it must have been his object to chant in true poetry the all-encompassing glories of their God, hence to raise a loftier anthem and a louder strain of praise. But from this picture or portrait, the reality of which was far a stranger thing than our shorn imaginations can educe, turn to his state, when, after his eating the forbidden fruit, the insupportable weight of the words fulfilled, "Thou shalt surely die!" dragged him to the very earth.

We are so familiar with death temporal and death spiritual, that we can but inadequately know it. They stare us in the face at all times — we see them as we pass along the streets, in our families, and at our tables. But could Adam come forth from the grave and the world unseen, and stand where I now stand, he could state to you the contrast which he learned, to his woeful experience, in colours which would require more than mortal strength to listen or to look to. The chill of death, the moment he had eaten, shot through his whole moral and physical constitution, blasting and withering, like the wilderness simoom, every beautiful affection and faculty and feeling and endowment that grew up before. The foul current of earthly propensities ran and mingled with the stream of heaven-born feelings — the wrinkles of years gathered on his brow, and the snows of age fell upon his head, and the dimness of age settled on his eyes. The conflict of motives, and the weakness of his intellectual powers, beset the sinful man; and not only his own constitution, but the constitution of encompassing nature, underwent a dire eclipse. The

atmosphere was filled with damps that hasten death ; the summer could now scorch and the winter chill ; the dumb brutes rose up in warfare one against another, and all against man. That first sin, like a sore stroke stricken on the heart of a man, sent its paralysis to the utmost extremities of the system. The natural death was severe, but the spiritual death was worse ; the one touched the body, the other the soul.

The character of this spiritual death was the loss and exhaustion of love to God — a ceaseless retreating from God. Accordingly, we find that Adam had no sooner sinned than he went and hid himself among the trees of the garden, whence, had not God brought him forth by the voice of mercy, mingled as it was with compassionate rebuke, death spiritual, temporal, and eternal, might have been perpetuated for ever, and the earth had presented a silent and vast grave.

In this single fact, of Adam's flight from God, we have a true and comprehensive discovery of spiritual death. You find the unregenerated man all life and liveliness in social intercourse—in the concerns of his present being—in the politics of the day—in all the petty and evanescent occupations of the children of this generation.

He shows life indeed in the cabinet of princes, or in the conflict of foemen. But appeal to him in behalf of God and his kingdom—in behalf of Christian institutions—and you find him insensible as the rock upon the sea-beaten beach. Look for fervency in prayer, and you find the freezing coldness of formality. Look for activity in recommending the gospel to his neighbours, and you find him useless as a creature out of its element. Look for him in anything that has to do with God and the Bible, and you find his state exactly portrayed by the apostle, — “dead,” “dead in sin,” destitute of that life which is the only life worth struggling for, destitute of that life for which our natural life is chiefly conferred, and hugged close in the cold embraces of that death which, if unquickened in time, must last throughout eternity. Let us look more closely at this death. Imagine to yourselves a lifeless body stretched upon its bier, in the midst of some assembly. Call around it the most noted and skilful anatomists of the age, and command them to examine the body that lies so

peacefully before them; and when they have done so, ask them to declare the difference between it and any living man beside them. They will inform you that they find all the organs of sense,—all the thews and sinews and vessels,—the heart, of most wonderful structure,—the lungs and arteries, and all they know to be requisite to constitute a breathing man. And there is no visible reason why he should not rise and walk. Yet the man is motionless; he gives no reply when his name is called; he seems to have no sympathy with doings around him. The most gracious benefactor and the most bitter enemy, alter not the one or the other the expression of his pallid face; praise or blame, kindness or insult, beget not a single emotion within its cold breast. Now this is a correct portrait of spiritual death. As the body, under the dominion of natural death, is unmoved by the objects that affected the body in life; so, in like manner, the soul under the power of spiritual death, is uninterested in all that excites the warmest emotions in the soul that is born again. The soul that is spiritually dead has its intellectual and its other powers, and to a superficial observer seems equally complete as the body in the same state, as far as the structure is concerned. But the one is as still in all its sympathies as the other; cold death lords it equally over the one as over the other. Again; bring by the ear of that lifeless body the master musicians of the age, and desire them, from many instruments in harmony, to awaken the noblest strains that Handel conceived—yea, could you summon down from heaven's citadels the seraphim and cherubim that struck their sweetest notes in the hearing of the humble shepherds of Bethlehem at the Messiah's birth, and entreat them to repeat in the dead man's presence the same high concert,—would he bestir a limb? would he betray an emotion? Nay, nay! The notes that thrilled every heart would pass by his as the idle and unnoticed winds.

Again, place before him the choicest dainties that the tables of the rich can command, all the fruits that art and propitious nature united can produce, all the wines of distant climes and richest soils, and withal pour out around him the most grateful and refreshing perfumes that Araby or India can raise,—and does the dead man gird himself for the feast? does he seem to be im-

mersed in delightful anticipation? Far from it; he is as quiet and unmoved as before. Give not over yet—lift him to a mountain's brow which commands the most glorious landscape earth possesses on her variegated surface. Entreat him to lift up those heavy eyelids, and to look athwart the fresh and winding streams, the waving fields and the flowery earth, and the untamed herds, and the watchful shepherds, and the vast ocean in the distance, with its sleepless eye upturned for ever to the sun,—and does he seem to enjoy the sight? does he begin to inhale the pure atmosphere, and to express his admiration of the view? Alas! there is no impression still.

Let the house in which he is laid take fire, and let there begin to fall about him its blazing fragments,—will the danger of a wife, or a mother, rouse him to their rescue? will the fearful devastation of the element, or the imploring prayers of his friends awaken him to rise and escape the ruin? He will remain untrifled and uninterested till the body is burned to ashes, and with it all that lies within the house.

But this, my friends, is the conduct of the soul that is spiritually dead in matters that apply to its constitution. Present to the soul that is dead in trespasses and sins all the glories of heaven on the one hand, and all the horrors of hell on the other; the perpetuity of a heavenly inheritance, and the transient nature of an earthly one; the pleasantness of holiness and Christian walk, and the unseemliness and disquiet of a sensual life;—tell it, it is dead and must be born again; it is condemned, and must be justified by faith in Christ Jesus; it is sinful and unclean, and must be purified by the Spirit of God;—tell it, it must seek the kingdom of heaven first, and then its own recreation; tell it, it must be transformed by the renewing of its mind, and conformed to God;—and it will treat all as a romantic story, it will maintain its wonted attitude, and even when it is summoned from this world to the next, it will plunge in unalarmed recklessness into the fire that is not quenched for ever and ever.

There may be no doctrinal errors in the creed, no extravagance in the sermon, no marked crookedness and inconsistency in the lives of our people, and yet no life. There may be in the worship

great rubrical decorum, and much activity in missionary enterprise; yet all may be the movements of an automaton.

You may retain some name significant of past and noble victories, and indicative of present duty, and yet be dead. You may be protestant in name and not in fact. Like a degenerate noble, you may wear the illustrious title that renders only more conspicuous your unworthiness and shame. Such a Church is a painted flower, with neither freshness, beauty nor vitality.

Like the ancient Egyptian temple, it is all beautiful without; but within, and in the niches of its deities, are the unclean products of the Nile. Its sacrifice is that of Cain, its humility that of Ahab, its tears those of Esau, and its repentance that of Judas. It seems, not is. Behold an apology for a Church, a titular Christianity, a pretence, a delusion, a sham!

The individual professor of a name to live by, while dead, may repeat the Creed, sign the Articles, subscribe the confession of faith, and yet be dead. There may be a dead orthodoxy and a living heresy. He may have much outward and virtuous excellence. Paul, touching the righteousness of the law, was blameless before he was a Christian. The foolish virgins were scarcely to be distinguished from the wise; but herein lies the difference:—true Christianity, visible in the life, comes forth from a vital principle within; nominal Christianity, as apparent, is superinduced from without.

There may be loud professions. Judas called Jesus "Master." The Pope calls himself "servant of servants." One may wear Christ's livery, and yet not be Christ's. The sounding ceremony—the gorgeous procession—the splendid robe, are not Christianity. There may be great privileges. These commend God to us, not us to God. These are evidences of his goodness, not of our excellence. The Jews in peril from their sins, cried out, "Bring us the ark of the Lord." We may follow our privileges to destruction, as the Jews followed the pillar of fire into the depths of the Red Sea.

One may have great gifts, and yet have but a name to live by. Like the spies that visited the Promised Land, we may bring back an eloquent report of its glory, and yet not enter it.

Balaam was a prophet—Judas was an apostle. Gifts are not grace—light is not life. Read the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and learn there how far we may rise, and yet miss Christianity. Many will say on that day, “Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?”

Anybody can make an apparent Christian. The Spirit of God alone can make a real Christian. Let us ask our Father to give us this same Holy Spirit, for Christ’s sake.

LECTURE XXI.

INSTANT DUTIES.

“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.”—REV. iii. 2.

YOU may recollect that I addressed you on the verse, A name to live by, whilst he that wears it is dead—the characteristic of a declining and almost extinguished Church. I likewise addressed you on the fourth verse last Sunday evening: “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.” Only then I discovered that I had not endeavoured to explain the second verse, which contains many beautiful, apposite, and seasonable prescriptions; and as every crumb that falls from the table of our Lord is precious, and every truth contained in these addresses is seasonable, beautiful, and instructive, I desire to open up all, and gather what I can of comfort, instruction, and direction, as I pass along.

Those then in the Church of Sardis who listened to the voice of that Church’s Lord are, in the first place, called upon, as we are called upon, to be watchful. “Be watchful”—this is a duty that is always imminent, a caution that is universally needful. The fact that we are called upon to be watchful, implies that there are some things we are to watch over, and other things we are to watch against. I will therefore give you, as I may be enabled, (and I pray that the Spirit of God may teach you to feel them,) some salutary and seasonable prescriptions based chiefly upon the words, “Be watchful.”

When watchful, we are so not only to keep off what is hostile, but to keep in what is good, cherished, and beloved. When we

shut the door at night, we not only do so to keep out the thief, but to keep in what we value. When we lock our cash-box, it is not only to keep from it the hands that would empty it, but to keep in it the money that we value, and have hardly earned. "Be watchful," therefore, implies not only there is something without that we have reason to dread, but that there is also something within, that we have grounds for valuing.

Be watchful, then, in the first place, I would say, over your affections. Thousands of attractions draw them from God, and keep them, if possible, at a distance from him. We are called upon, as the people of God, to keep, by his grace, those affections that he has given us; clustering around his throne like flowers that his smiles have made beautiful, and his breath has made fragrant, ever lifting their heads, and towering towards that Sun whose beams are their nutriment and their beauty; and yielding in return, fragrance, as the expression of the gratitude we feel, and as the only response we can make to him to whom we are indebted for them all. Be watchful, then, over your affections, that they do not creep and spread upon the earth — that they do not cling to an idol, nor cleave to what is sinful, nor go out after what is forbidden. See that they tower and rise until they culminate where the secret of their happiness is, the throne of God.

Be watchful, in the next place, over your hearts. "Keep thy heart," says one who spoke from experience, "with all diligence." Keep thy heart with all diligence: it is a casket that a thousand thieves are ready to break open; it is a precious deposit that a thousand antagonistic forces are ready to destroy. Watch over it; keep it diligently; let not the cares of the world, so seductive, absorb it; nor the anxieties of the world irritate it; nor the fears of the world depress it; nor the forebodings of the world agitate it. "Let not your hearts be troubled;" ye believe in God, believe also in Jesus.

Be watchful, I would say, in the next place, over your convictions of truth. If you have come to the conclusion that God's word is true, that Christ is the only Saviour, that the Bible is the only infallible directory, do not surrender these convictions. Do not suppose because a skeptic starts an objection which you cannot solve, that therefore it is insoluble; do not think because a

difficulty occurs that you cannot surmount, that it is therefore insurmountable. You would find, if you had a little more light, and would be a little more patient, and make a little more inquiry, that there is no objection to God's word that may not be dispersed; and that there is no difficulty in the way of the reception of its most precious truths which may not make us either more reverent, or be removed as a stumbling-block out of the way. Resist therefore the threats of the open foe that would destroy your faith, and the seductions of the secret foe that would undermine your faith. Do not let your creed waver with your pulse; let it remain as fixed a thing as the rock on which it is based; and though all things around you should fail, and faint, and fall, let your convictions which you have gathered from your Bible, and have been taught by the Spirit, remain, by God's grace, fixed and immutable as he that gave them.

In the next place, be watchful over your experience and feelings. I meet with many Christians who say, "Oh, I do not feel that I am what I should be; I do not feel the peace and joy I could wish." True it is, and all of us must say so. What I suggest as the proper prescription for such Christians is, We walk, just as we live, not by feeling, but by faith. If we walked by feeling, we should be in heaven or hell. The very fact that we are here, is the very evidence that we are to walk by faith, and not by feeling. Is there any man that fears who walks in darkness, and has no light? What is he to do? To say: "Because all my feelings are gone, therefore I must faint, and despair, and die?" "No," says the prophet, "let him trust in the Lord, and stay himself upon his God." The Christian often finds that he must walk, not only over his feelings, but against his feelings, and in spite of his feelings, and when all his feelings are gone; but he still trusts in an unseen, but not unknown God, his rock, his refuge, his sun, his shield, his exceeding great and unspeakable reward.

In the next place, let me call upon you to be watchful over, or rather against, Satan. I believe Satan is not, as the skeptic says, a figure of speech, but an archangel ruined, retaining an archangel's cunning, an archangel's power, an archangel's unweariedness; and "he goeth about seeking whom he may devour." I

believe that it is the hearts which are first opened, by our unwatchfulness, into which he enters, and in which he lives as his favourite tenements. Watch, therefore, against him; or rather, in the language of an apostle, "resist" him. And what will he do? Fight you, and master you? No; Satan is a coward. And why is he so? Because he was conquered—"I saw Satan, like lightning, fall from heaven." Just as it is with some dogs; and even as it is with the lion himself; if you run and flinch, they will rush upon you and destroy you; but zoologists will tell you, than man's eye riveted even upon the ravenous lion of the wilderness, awes the fierce brute into quiet, and makes him cringe. A bold man is ever a strong man; and in the case of resistance to Satan, he that resists him is sure to conquer him; but he that flees from him, or is not watchful against him, is sure to be conquered by him.

In the next place, be watchful against sin. It creeps towards us with silent, but destructive miasma; it stings with the deadly venom of a serpent; it is most fatal in its most attractive shape. Sin never approaches us simply as sin; nor does Satan generally deal with us simply as Satan. Sin puts on attractive robes; it assumes the form of expediency, or profit, or of pleasure; and it is only after we have tasted the pleasure that we feel the sting which is ever concealed amid its flowers. Be watchful, then, against sin.

Be watchful, in the next place, against error—against religious error. It is generally associated with sin. More heresy is connected with sin than we are disposed to imagine. The heart, I believe, has a more powerful influence over the head, than the head has over the heart. Error first darkens the understanding, and then the heart is opened to the reception of sin; and when sin has entered into the heart, it again reacts and darkens the understanding, and makes it more accessible to error. In the present day erroneous doctrines will approach you in the guise of reason, of Church authority, of humility, of reverence, putting on robes and colours as false as they are seductive and perilous. There is the Legalist that leans upon his good works, and expects salvation by them; there is the Antinomian that professes to lean on Jesus, but lives in sin, and delights in doing so; there are

those that despise all order, and there are those that make a god of order; there are those that lose man's responsibility in God's sovereignty, and there are those that lose God's sovereignty in man's responsibility; there is Scylla on the right, and Charybdis on the left; and only by fastening the eye on the "bright and Morning Star," can we steer in safety between, and reach the haven of rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Be watchful, in the next place, if I may use the expression, against watchlessness. We are often disposed not to anticipate heaven as an encouragement more ardently to pursue it, but to suppose that we are already arrived there. We sleep like a sentinel who is unfaithful at his post; we sheathe the sword, as if the battle were done; we shut our eyes, and cry, Peace, peace, when there is no peace at all. Like the Laodicean Church, we say, We are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," at the time we may be poor, and blind, and wretched, and miserable, and destitute of all things. Let us, then, ever be awake as the children of the day, and watch against that apathy, indifference, and sleep, which lead to the betrayal of our trust, and to the loss of our blessedness.

In the next place, let me ask you to be watchful against infidelity. It is putting up its head in the present day; it is assuming new aspects, putting on new attractions. It always has this attraction to the natural man, that it will allow him to live as he likes. In the present day it assumes all forms that are tempting to the young. It leads the young man, whose intellect just begins to expand into vigour and maturity, to fancy that to be able to laugh at Christianity is to indicate a noble and magnanimous mind; and that to be able to treat with scorn and contempt the Church, the ministry, and the Bible, is to burst the shackles of early prejudice, and to assert for one's self an independence and freedom, noble and worthy of humanity. We have its latest developments in the pantheism of Emerson; and in the miserable and extravagant whims of Strauss; and in the vaunting glories of those who boast that a new era of progress is beginning, and, as they blasphemously say, that new Messiahs are to be expected. But whatever the shape it assumes, whatever the ground on which it builds, it is the un-spent echo of the voice of the old

fool who, three thousand years ago, cried in his folly, "No God." "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." I say to my young hearers before me, Remember, that licentiousness is not liberty; that rationalism is not reason; that the rejection of Christianity is not progress: and that man truly degrades, not dignifies, himself, who boasts that he has got beyond the Bible, and landed in the knowledge of a philosophy brighter, better, purer, nobler than it.

Let me call upon you to be watchful, not only against infidelity, but also against popery. In its principle, and in its full expansion—in its bud and in its blossom, it makes way. I heard only the other day, that the Romanists are to build a magnificent popish cathedral in Edinburgh. I need not remind you that a decision has been come to in one of the Ecclesiastical Courts in England, by Sir Herbert Jenner Fust, in the Exeter dispute, (but which, I rejoice to say, is not final; for if it were final it would be awful,) that baptismal regeneration is the doctrine of the Church of England—that every man who is baptized, be he what he may, is a child of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Now I do not believe that this is the doctrine of the Church of England. I lament the phraseology of one of its services; but I am satisfied from what I know of the writings of Cranmer and Latimer, and Ridley, and from the correspondence of those who compiled the liturgy, with some of the reformers on the Continent, that they never meant to convey that doctrine, however liable to misapplication their language may be, and I do submit that it is so. But if this decision be not reversed by the Queen in Council, who, with the archbishops, I believe, is the last tribunal of appeal, then the result will be—what prophecy leads us to conclude is coming—the utter rending into atoms of the whole Church of England, along with other establishments. I have told you that when great Babylon falls, the cities of all the nations begin to fall. The tokens, and foreshadows, of that day we see at this moment spreading over the whole earth. I sincerely hope that the decision which has been come to will be reversed. I rejoice to know that the Archbishop of York has written a most admirable charge, in which he denounces this doctrine in language worthy of John

Knox, and with a faithfulness worthy of a Christian Minister. If, therefore, this decision be final, he resigns his Archbishopric as a matter of course; and no doubt he will have grace to do so. I must say, if it be final, then I should grieve and mourn over the ruin of a communion to which Christendom is profoundly indebted for the noblest works on theology, and the most splendid contributions to the Christian literature of the Church. But I hope it is not final; I pray it may not be so. All this, however, is evidence irresistible, and apparent to every one, that the Pope and Satan are busy, and that the last spasmodic effort of the Popedom is now made to affect every church and all society with that deadly and pestiferous poison, which is infidelity in its essence—but infidelity far more perilous than that of Strauss, for it is clothed in the splendid robes, and speaks the hallowed language of Christianity itself. Be separate, then, from it; have nothing to do with it; never for one moment admit the doctrine that any priest has power to make a new heart, or that any church has the privilege and the monopoly of making a man a Christian: listen to no teaching, however eloquent; hear no minister, however consistent may be his life, who would put the priest in the room of Jesus, the teaching of the Church in the room of the Bible, splendid forms in the place of a spiritual worship, a corporate ecclesiastical responsibility in the room of personal responsibility to God for what we believe, and love, and live, and do before him.

I have thus then given you, what I cannot imprint upon the heart, but what I pray that the Spirit of God may, — a few prescriptions based upon the words, “Be watchful.” Let me now turn your attention to the sequel: “Strengthen the things that are ready to die.”

In these Christians there were some things that were ready to die. My dear friends, Christianity, notwithstanding all its beauty, its inherent immortality and life, would die in this world if it were not constantly watched, fostered, and sustained by God himself. I say, Christianity and Christians would die if they were not sustained by Christ himself, and fed continually by him.

Let me ask you, are your graces ready to die? Has your faith,

which was once able to remove mountains, grown incrustated into mere sense? Has your hope, which once glowed and flamed till it aspired to the firmament itself, folded its wings, and settled down upon the earth, and become a miserable drudge? Has your holiness lost its pristine bloom, and parted with its early and its heavenly beauty? Has your gold gathered dross? Is your wine mixed with water? Is the flame become smoke? Is the pulse feeble at the wrist? Does the soul give token that it is ready to die? Has your love of the world grown with your years, so that instead of being more detached from it, you have become more and more glued to the things that are perishing? Is there less separation from the world? Do you say, "My separation from the world when I was younger, was prejudice, methodism, fanaticism; I may now take a step further; I may associate with some whom formerly I could not associate with, and indulge in things I formerly repudiated?" Is your love for the sabbath less? Is your liking for the sanctuary, for the sermon, for prayer, for communion, fainter, feebler, dying? Then, my dear friends, you are in jeopardy; your graces are ready to expire; you are called upon to rekindle them at the sun, to refresh them in the fountain; to strengthen them by appealing to God's strength, lest they wholly die. All winds are ready to blow out that holy flame; all waves are ready to quench that holy heart; it needs the watchfulness of the Christian, the protection of the Christian's God, to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

But, my dear friends, recollect that when we begin a downward path, it is like a stone rolling down an inclined plane or a hill; its velocity accelerates the further it goes. The first step is the important one. We have this beautifully sketched in the first Psalm: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Notice the progression. First of all there is the *ungodly*. Who are they? Persons who are moral, but have no vital religion. Then next, there are the *sinners*—that is, persons who live in the practice of open sin. Thirdly, there are *scornful* persons, who are skeptics, and despise Christianity. When a person begins to decline, and his Christianity

begins to die, he walks, first, in the counsel of the ungodly—those who have no religion, but who are moral persons; next, he is found in the way of sinners—those who are practically wicked; and lastly, he is found among the scorers, or those that laugh at all religion. First of all he *walks* in the counsel of the ungodly; then he takes a further step, and *stands* in the way of sinners; and then he takes his last step of all, and *sits down* in the chair of the scorer.

Such is the progression from life to death—from things that are living, to “things that are ready to die.” But the prescription here is, Strengthen these things. How are you to strengthen them? Can man strengthen them? No; you can no more strengthen a single grace within you than by any action or combination of muscles you can lift yourself from the ground. By your muscles you can move to one side or to the other, forward or backward, but no concentration of muscular energy can lift a man by himself from the ground. Neither can anything in man’s soul save himself, or strengthen, or implant, or increase, within him a single grace of the Spirit of God. We can move right or left, but up we cannot move until God draw us by Christ, the Magnet of the universe, drawn to whom we shall rise under that attraction which leaves us not till we are in glory. Civilization, science, morals, decency, outward opinion, public influence, may and do improve man in things that are outward; but every influence that man can exert, merely lifts him out of one place into another. If some filings of iron were placed in the mud, I could lift them from the mud in the street into the beautiful mown grass; and the change would be a good and valuable one; but if I pass over these filings a magnet, it lifts them not merely from the mud into the beautiful parterre, (so far an improvement,) but it lifts them up from the earth, and gives them a vertical direction. Now, every influence that man can exert upon man is horizontal; it may move him from one degree of morality to another, or it may improve him outwardly, or alter his external appearance, and his external doings: but until the great Magnet of the universe pass over him and give him a vertical direction, lifting him from earth to the skies, from the world to God, he will be still dead in trespasses and in sins.

Then you ask, how are you to strengthen the things that are ready to die? I answer, by prayer: not that prayer is the foundation of strength, but it is the key that unlocks the fountain of strength. When I say that we are to strengthen these things by prayer, it is because God has promised to hear prayer. Prayer draws down celestial strength; it gathers over you the shield of omnipotence; it lays you under the folded wings of the Son of God. Let me ask you then, Do you pray? In your closet, in your homes, in your shops, amid all the roar of the wheels of this world, one single utterance of the heart—"O God, save me, sanctify me, pardon me," rises, and is heard where the seven thunders are, and louder than them all. Amid all the clouds and smoke of this world, amid all its confusion, its darkness, its perplexity, a sinner upon his knees supplicating forgiveness is seen from the throne of God, and beheld there as the most beautiful spectacle that earth presents. Do you pray? It is God's great ordinance, in the use of which he strengthens "the things that remain and that are ready to die."

Another means by which you are to strengthen them, is by reading God's holy word. A Persian poet says, a flower that grows near the rose scents of the rose. So you will find that contact with God's word always exerts upon the soul a sanctifying and ennobling and enlightening effect. Let me ask you then, Do you read God's holy word? If you do, you will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that will bring forth its fruit in due season. Take a Bible with references, or with notes that are clear and plain, and study it—not, however, large portions of it at a time. Take a portion, however small, every day, and try to understand it, and pray that the Spirit of God would enable you to understand it. Take with you into the world some Bible text; imprint upon your hearts some bright, musical promise; and it will, by God's blessing, have a sustaining and strengthening effect.

Strengthen the things that are ready to die by waiting upon the ordinances of God, upon the worship of God, on the preaching of the Gospel. I know that many say, and say truly, that if they stop at home, they can read a sermon far more argumentative, eloquent, and beautiful than anything that any man in

London can preach from the pulpit. This is perfectly true ; but there is just this difference—that you come to the house of God, not merely to hear a sermon, but you come to pray—to join in public prayer ; you come to praise—to join in public praise ; which is an ordinance of God. When you hear a sermon preached from the pulpit, you not only hear a man speak, but you listen and do honour to an ordinance that God has instituted, in observing and honouring which God has promised to come and bless you. And more than this ; you know quite well that there is a power, as there is a freedom, in the spoken word which there is not in the written or printed word. In explaining the Bible to you, I could not write down all I say : I feel far more freedom in talking to you with my lips than ever I could do in sitting down to write with my pen. You know quite well that a truth which has slipped your mind and left no impression when you read it, has, when spoken from the pulpit, entered the ear, and sunk into the heart, and has never forsaken you nor been forgotten by you. You yourselves give testimony to this when you tell me what you have told me with regard to my own preaching. You have heard me preach a sermon ; and some one in this congregation has felt, as I bless God I hear some do feel, it to be blessed to him. The sermon perhaps is printed, and you read it ; it has been taken down, as many of them have been, *verbatim* ; but when you read it you say, “This is not the sermon I heard.” It, however, is the very same ; it is so, *verbatim*. But yet, there is that in the living voice, speaking to living men, which there is not in the dead types, speaking to the looking and the most attentive eye. God, therefore, has laid hold of the best instrumentality to do the best results. You know, too, in preaching, how much more useful to you is the freedom of a preacher who does not read his sermons, than the preaching of one who reads them. I do not think reading sermons is best. I like myself best to hear them read, because I am often better satisfied with them ; but I am convinced that the living speaker, speaking the thoughts that are in his soul in language furnished to him at the moment, does speak with a power and demonstration and effect—notwithstanding his little inelegancies, his periods not so well rounded, his sentences not so perfectly finished for critical ears—with which

you never can be addressed from sermons merely read from manuscripts. I am no fanatic; I am sure you will acquit me of that; but I know that the best thoughts I have ever spoken to you, and the thoughts that I know have been most blessed to you, are the thoughts that never occurred to me in my study, but that have sprung up in my heart at the moment I have been speaking, suggested often by that attentive face that looked to me there, and by that riveted eye that was fixed upon me here, and by that silent listening that was perceptible elsewhere. I am persuaded, therefore, that God speaks to his ministers in the pulpit, and there through his ministers to the people. I do not say, that to read one's sermons (because good men do so, greater and better men than I,) is to dishonour the Holy Ghost; but I do say that in my case, and in my experience, it would be parting with an element of power and a means of good which I would not resign for the whole world. But do not suppose that by extemporaneous preaching I mean going into the pulpit and saying what comes uppermost. Though I do not write my sermons, it costs me hard and weary thinking, often followed by many a sleepless night, to prepare them. It does not follow that because a man does not write his sermons, that therefore he does not study them. It is quite possible to write in the most extemporaneous manner, as it is to speak in the most extemporaneous manner. Sermons that are written may be the most random shots; sermons that are not written may be the results of the deepest study, meditation, and prayer. A sermon, my dear friends, will always be blessed to you, when, in your homes, in your closets, and when you seat yourselves in these pews, you lift up your hearts to him who can give unction to the minister's lip, and open the people's heart, and pray that he will be pleased to give his servant a word in season that will be blessed to you.

Then the text concludes: "Remember also how thou hast received." What are you to remember? Remember what a free Gospel is sounded in your ears; remember what golden opportunities you have, that are passing with the rapidity of angels' wings; what solemn responsibilities you have incurred; what encouragements you have;—remember these things, and repent of the past, and take courage for the future. "Remember how

thou hast received;" at what a price your privileges have been purchased, at what a sacrifice these have been perpetuated; in spite of what unworthiness these have been continued.

And while you "remember how thou hast received," "be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die," lest Christ come upon you in judgment, in an hour when ye think not. All things encourage you to do so. God waits to strengthen you. You have only to ask. God waits to bless you. You have only to open your heart to receive the blessing. Do not, my dear friends, misunderstand what Christianity is. It is not calling upon you to do something, to suffer something, to pay something, but to receive something, perfect, complete, and finished already. It is asking you to believe, and be saved; to look to and lean on God's love, as that love comes through the channel of Christ's sacrifice, and is applied to you by Christ's Spirit; and so looking, so leaning, so believing, you shall have a life that will outlast the earth, and shine only more beautiful when the firmament and all things seen shall have been burned up and passed away like a parched scroll.

LECTURE XXII.

THE WALK IN WHITE.

“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.” — REV. iii. 4.

I ADDRESSED you some time ago upon the introductory part of the address of our Lord to the Church of Sardis: “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” I endeavoured to explain what such a dead state of religious profession may be construed to mean.

But after this part of his address, which declares the dark and unpromising condition of the Church of Sardis, our Lord indicates that in the midst of the enveloping darkness there were scattered and beautiful lights — that notwithstanding the all but universal hypocrisy, there were true men, and good men, and faithful left: “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis [bad as it is,] which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.”

“Name” is used in Scripture as a synonyme for person. We find it so used, for instance, in the Acts of the Apostles (ch. i. 15), where we read that “the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty.” No doubt, therefore, the word “name” is used in Scripture, and here unquestionably, to denote a person. In this world names too frequently stand in all their ancient and just expressiveness, while the realities of which they were originally the exponents have utterly departed. In this age the meanest men often wear the most magnificent names; but in the spiritual world, and in the word of God, we find ourselves in the world of realities, and things are precisely what they

sound. Perhaps one design of the use of the word "name" in this passage may be, that the contrast may more clearly appear to the expression in the first verse: "Thou hast a *name* that thou livest." If there be many depraved in the Church of Sardis, our Lord says they are not all so; if there be there names the most significant in sound, but the most untrue in their application, it is not so universally; there are even there names that are the exponents of character, and the persons that wear them are better and nobler than the most eloquent and high-sounding titles they bear: if there be those who have an expressive name to conceal the features of the soul that is dead, there are, at the same time, those who have names which are the inadequate and unequal exponents of their features, their history, and their worth. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments." Seldom, therefore, we conclude, is the Church of Christ so corrupt that there are no true Christians in it. There is no Church in Christendom all of whose members are Christians; and there is no Church in Christendom in which there are not some Christians. In ancient times there was a Noah in the midst of the all but universal apostasy of the antediluvian world; there was a Lot in the midst of Sodom; an Abraham in the midst of Ur; a Job in the land of Uz. The sky is rarely so overcast that one or two bright stars may not be detected through some chink; the Alps and the Appenines are not so frost-bitten and blasted that there blooms not here and there a solitary violet that, sought out, will be found to repay by its beauty and fragrance him that seeks it. There is rarely a wilderness so bleak that there is not a spring, or an oasis, or a tree in it. When Ahab had destroyed the prophets of the Lord, and Elijah thought he was alone, there were seven thousand, invisible to him, who had not bowed the knee to Baal; and in Malachi's days, when almost the whole Church had apostatised, there was still a remnant that "feared the Lord, and spake often to one another;" and God entered their names in the book of his remembrance, and promised that they should be his in that day when he should make up his jewels.

Here then we derive — first, comfort that there is no Church so depraved that there are not some good people in it; and,

secondly, we are taught that Christ's promise, which says the Church of Rome has failed, if she be not the true Church, is notwithstanding fulfilled, because there are still at least two or three Christians to be found upon the earth — "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Find three Christians left, and Christ's promise is seen to be true. Every living Christian is a living temple in which the Lord dwells — an evidence that he has not forsaken his Church—a proof that miracles are in the midst of it: for the greatest of all miracles is the transformation of a corrupt heart, and the quickening of a dead one. Let us also rejoice that the few found in the midst of a Church, or in the bosom of a city, or in the situations, the offices, and the high places of a land, are the substance of that Church, the safety of that city, the real patriots — the best muniments and battlements of the land in which they live. God would not rain his judgments on Sodom until Lot had escaped from the midst of it, nor would he pour down the vials of his wrath upon Jerusalem, justly and long fore-doomed of God, until the Christians had escaped and were all lodged in Pella. In the Apocalypse it is declared that Great Babylon shall not be utterly consumed until God's people in the midst of it have heard the warning cry, and have rushed to the true ark, there to find a shelter in the midst of the judgments which are destined to alight upon the world and the apostasy together. Let us, then, never forget that the highest Christianity is the highest patriotism — that the strongest pillar that sustains the throne and supports the state, is the Christian—that the moment Christianity is exhausted from a nation's life, the oxygen is gone from its atmosphere, the life-blood is emptied from its system, and all its institutions and economy must fall asunder like ropes of sand, that have no cohesion or binding power to keep them in unity. Let us then feel — truly feel — that when we spread the Gospel, we augment the element which contributes most effectually to the safety, the strength, and the perpetuity of our father land; and not only so, but when we spread the Gospel in the midst of the poorest and most destitute localities of that land, we do that which will extinguish all the elements of revolution, and raise the people, purify, ennoble them. At the same time, I cannot

but add, as I have often said before, notwithstanding all the efforts of the City Mission, of Scripture Readers, of Parochial Ministers, and Ministers of every denomination, the hope of evangelizing the masses in London is distant indeed, unless something be done, not merely to ameliorate, but humanize their now brutalized physical and sanitary condition. I was speaking this morning in this church to a physician who belongs to the Board of Health, and who has been visiting the worst parts of Salisbury, London, and other places; and he told me (and I wish those were now present who are usually present at an earlier season of the year,) that the dogs of noblemen and gentlemen are treated in a way that the poor in this great metropolis are absolute strangers to. We hear of the pestilence in the midst of us. The wonder is, that instead of hundreds, it does not mow down its hundreds of thousands. This great judgment is sent upon us greatly and mainly to stir up those that have, to do something for those poor, destitute, hunger-bitten, perishing creatures in the midst of us, who are strangers to a blanket, to a fire, and nourishing food.

Were an angel to come to our country from the skies, and to read upon our coins—our half-pence, our pence, our shillings, our sovereigns—what I rejoice to read, but what I grieve to add is omitted on the last new coin introduced to our currency—*Dei gratiâ*, “By the grace of God;” and were this stranger from another world to hear us say that we are a Christian nation; and were he then taken to some of the dens and alleys in St. Giles’s, to Field Lane, and the east end and south side of London, and allowed to witness the awful scenes in those localities, where man is brutalized—nay, sunk below the brutes—and were he also to be told that on the body of a poor woman being brought before a coroner’s inquest, it is proved upon evidence irresistible that by making shirts, (and this is your cheap goods, and your cheap market system!) she earns one shilling a-week, that she has not tasted animal food for six months, and that the threat of her master to reduce her pittance to sixpence a-week was the last stroke which, too severe for her to stand, struck her down the ripe victim for cholera; and were he again reminded that this is a Christian land,—would he not feel that it was a mockery, an

insult, or irony the most derisive, to call us so? My dear friends, you may depend upon it, until the rick will unscrew one, two, or three pegs, and come down, and minister to the wants and necessities of the poor far more munificently than heretofore, disclosures of conditions that will shock every man that hears of them will be more frequent; and greater and more terrible judgments will overtake our land still. The judgment that is in the midst of us now is intended among other things to lead us to sympathise with the poor, to visit and elevate and minister to them. It is a remarkable feature in the word of God, that his directions and prescriptions for the care of the poor are so often reiterated; his Gospel is addressed to the poor, and there is no sin he punishes more than the despisal of the poor. If this be the great besetting sin of this wealthy and commercial metropolis, let us who are here present try and mend our ways. You will think it a very common-place prescription, but I think it a very wholesome one, when I advise you, in purchasing the clothes you wear, never to go to those places where you can get everything at less than cost price—"dead bargains"—"tremendous sacrifices," and almost for nothing. When I read the evidence that is given, and the tales that are told before coroners' inquests, I feel it is a sacred Christian duty for every man to go to respectable tradesmen for all he wears, and give a proper price for what he purchases, and be satisfied.

That dire and terrible grinding, by which our commerce is characterised, the sacrifice which is made of life, health, and honesty in the pursuit of money, is a sin that cries to heaven for vengeance, and God has come forth from his hiding-place to avenge it. I have been led thus to say, that until the physical condition of the poor is ameliorated, (and it would be impossible for me to describe in detail all I have heard and witnessed respecting it,) there is but too faint hope of evangelizing them. Let both go together; let each man in his neighbourhood, in his sphere, in his place of business, wherever he has influence, try to raise the condition of all around him, to minister to the necessities of the poor, so that when he moves through the world, that world may recollect him, not as a blank that has done no good, nor as a curse

that has done undiluted mischief, but as a blessing to be thankful for when present, and to be regretted when gone.

It is alleged of those few in the midst of Sardis, that they had not defiled their garments: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments." The world's atmosphere is here represented as a defiling medium, tainting what it touches, and covering the purest with its pernicious oxides; it is the element which a Christian has to breathe, and live, and walk in, and yet preserve in virgin purity his holy and spotless robes. The difficulty of his position is, to breathe such air, and walk in such an element, and at the same time escape the taint and pollution to which he is everywhere liable. This not defiling their garments, then, is simply keeping a holy and consistent walk in the midst of the world; *in* it, but not *of* it; as Daniel was in the midst of Babylon, protesting against its sins, not partaking of them. As our Lord and Master was in the world, but not of the world, so should we be; having intercourse with its men,—occupying, if needs be, its offices,—gathering, if Providence permits us, its legitimate profits,—discharging the varied social and political duties that devolve upon us in the Providence of God,—and yet maintaining a consistent, spotless purity, that will commend the Gospel to the ignorant, and draw sinners to the only Saviour. It is quite true that there is no such thing as absolute purity attainable below. God himself has said that 'there is not a just man on earth that sinneth not;' another, has said, "In many things we offend alway;" and another has said, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." What, therefore, is implied in keeping our garments pure, is, maintaining ourselves blameless and harmless, the sons of God, as lights in the world in the midst of a crooked generation, doing nothing that shall bring discredit on the Gospel we profess, but adorning the doctrine in all things, so that the world shall not be able to point at us the finger, and say, "These are the men who appear at the Communion-table all devotion, but who, in the wear and tear of this world's traffic, pursue all crooked and disingenuous ways, do all sorts of dishonest things, and are too justly chargeable with practices which even the irreligious abhor. They who are thus preserved, are those who realize this blessed

promise: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." Again; the Apostle says, "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." These are the folds of these garments; these the graces given them by the Spirit of God; this the charge we are called upon, by the word of Him that giveth them, to maintain pure, spotless, inviolate, in the midst of a defiled and defiling world. The promise is to such, "They shall walk with me in white;"—a walk that begins below, moves upward in light, and culminates in glory—a walk whose commencement has a date, whose close is never. Heaven begins with that Genesis which our Lord explained to Nicodemus, as earth began with that old Genesis which God unfolded to Moses. Heaven commences here, or it will never commence at all. The moment a man is born again, that moment he turns his back upon the things he pursued before, and he courts, and cleaves, and aspires to those unseen and glorious things which heretofore were foolishness to him.

They who thus keep their garments undefiled, shall walk with Christ in white. Then they are perfectly agreed together—Christ and the believer are of one mind,—“for how can two walk together unless they be agreed?” They have the same deep hatred of sin in kind if not in degree, the same ardent thirst after holiness, the same beneficent and missionary spirit. Having the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, they walk with him; and when they walk with him, they do so in perfect confidence in the safety of their walk, and in the wisdom of their leader; they stand still where Christ stands still; they never precede him—that would be presumption; they never fall behind him—this would be distrust; they walk *with* him,—and this is Christianity. They do so, too, in constant and growing obedience, listening to his every word, obeying his every precept, drinking in his every promise, and cherishing the least hope he allows them to entertain. Does Christ say to them, “Pray?” They do not say, “How can Christ answer my prayer, without reversing the very movements and machinery of the universe?” This is a metaphysical question they do not discuss. Christ

says, "Ask, and ye shall obtain; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; seek, and ye shall find;" and, without looking at the difficulties of it, or the metaphysics of it, they pray, and their prayers, as their experience sweetly testifies, are answered. When believers prayed in the age of miracles, the miracle was wrought before them; when we pray now, the same miracle may be wrought, but in a loftier region, where our eyes cannot see it; the power in action is equally omnipotence, and the results are equally miraculous. It is just as true now, that if you ask you shall obtain, as it was that if the apostle Paul asked he should obtain; for the promise that was yea and amen in the apostolic age, is the promise that shall be yea and amen till the last ripe believer is gathered to his everlasting home. They, therefore, walk with Christ in growing obedience to him, in simple compliance with his word, and finding their greatest safety and their greatest happiness in doing just as he bids them. They walk with Christ, too, humbly; they "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God." We must be content to be ignorant about many things we should like to know; we must be satisfied not to know the end and the issue of many things of which we see the beginning. The angels that are before the throne, who bask in the splendours of the beatific vision, and see clearly all things that are there, humbly veil their faces with their wings, and trust that all will be holy, beneficent, and happy, though they are unable to trace, in the commencement, the middle and the issue. This walk with Christ, too, is in happiness and perfect joy; they walk with Christ not only in perfect coincidence with him, in happy and growing obedience to him, and in true humility beside him, but also in happiness and in joy. The Christian's life is a happy life. The miseries we feel come not from our Christianity, but from our want of it. When we begin to feel unhappy, it is then we have begun to let go the recollection of the truth as it is in Jesus. Whenever the unhappy fit comes upon you, open the page of the New Testament, read the bright promises, remember that this music from these golden harps is for you, and hear a voice sounding from the midst of it: "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. I will not leave

you orphans; I will come again unto you, and receive you unto myself. And if ye ask anything in my name, I will do it." We walk with Christ not as victims with an avenger, not as slaves with a tyrant, not as the vanquished with their conqueror, but as sons with the father, brethren with an elder Brother, friends with the Friend that sticketh even closer than a brother. And such a walk, with all its stumblings, its shadows, its short-comings, must be, in the main, a joyful and a happy walk. Do not forget that one of the great ends of Christianity is to make men happy, to irradiate the sick-bed with new beauty, the grave with new lustre, the unseen world with new splendour, and to make you feel that nothing can separate you "from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

But this walk, this holy, happy, humble walk, is only the introduction to a yet more glorious one, when things now seen and temporal shall be no more. It is very beautiful to notice, that every promise of a future joy made to a child of God, in the Scriptures, bears some relation to the distinguishing feature by which that child of God is here characterized. Are you, for instance, among those who hunger and thirst after righteousness? Then the promise that will be so sweet to you in its earnest upon earth, and so rich to you in its full enjoyment, is, "You shall be filled." Are you among peace-makers? Then the promise the earnest of which you will realize below, and the full enjoyment of which you shall taste above, is, "You shall be called"—that is, you shall *be*—"the children of God." Are you among the pure in heart? The promise corresponds to the character—"You shall see God." It is of grace that we receive the least mercy, and yet God is pleased to add the promise and the hope of reward in order to stimulate us in our Christian walk, to cheer us in the prospect of our final and our everlasting home. So here, those who keep their garments undefiled, who walk with beautiful feet the paths of holiness in a rugged world, shall, as their reward in heaven, walk with Jesus in white.

This promise that we shall walk in white with him, implies that we shall walk with him in perfect purity. Who are these that are arrayed in white robes? Whence come they? They are they that have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood

of the Lamb. Nothing that defileth can enter heaven. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. There will be no stain on those spotless robes; there will be no moth in that pure apparel; no worm in those goodly cedars; no rust in that virgin gold; no taint in that atmosphere of life, and purity, and love; no pollution in those springs of living waters, which shall be opened to them that live and reign with the Lamb for ever.

This expression, "walk in white," denotes, also, that they shall be amid perfect glory; as is evident from such passages as these:—In the transfiguration on the mount, it is said, "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." This was the picture of Christ in glory. Another evangelist adds this further feature, "so that no fuller on earth could whiten it." The angel at the tomb also had a countenance, we read, like lightning, and his raiment was white as snow. The expression, therefore, "they shall walk with me in white," denotes that they shall walk with Christ in glory, irradiated with that unutterable glory and beauty. This expression also denotes dignity and rank. The ancient priests and kings were clothed in white, and the Roman Patricians wore white as their distinction. So with us, too, if we have washed our robes, and made them white in that blood; we too, if it is our prayer and our effort to keep our garments undefiled in the world; we too, who war with sin, and rise, even though we may have fallen, and pray and wrestle again; we, too, shall walk with Christ in white, and shall be presented unto him (to quote a parallel passage) "a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," in that place where righteousness shall shine forth as the sun, "and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many unto righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

Such then is the condition of this Church—a few in the midst of Sardis, Christians among the unchristian many; such, secondly, is their character—not defiling their garments; such, lastly, is their reward—they shall walk with Christ upon earth in the enjoyment of the earnest, and they shall walk with Christ hereafter in the full enjoyment, of the full blessing—they shall walk with him in white.

Then it is added, "for they are worthy." What does this word mean? What sense must we attach to it? There are two senses in which the word "worthy" is used, and we are at liberty, nay, we are commanded, to adopt that which appears to be most plainly coincident with the whole strain and tenor of God's word. The word is used in the sense of merit, as, "he that did things *worthy* of stripes,"—that is, deserving. "This is a faithful saying, and *worthy* of all acceptance,"—that is, deserving all acceptance. Again; "Thou art *worthy* to take the book." In this sense no human being can be worthy, if there be truth in Scripture or consistency in the Gospel; and in this sense, therefore, the word cannot here be construed. In its other sense it is said, "He that loveth father, or mother, or sister, or brother, more than me, is not *worthy* of me,"—that is, "it indicates the spirit that disqualifies him for following me." "Bring forth fruits *meet* for repentance:" here the word translated *meet* is the same that is rendered *worthy*, and means, "fitted to," "corresponding to." "Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet [or worthy] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." In this second sense, therefore, the word denotes fitness. In the first sense it cannot be here used; for, "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God:" "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." Our comfort, our happiness, our peace at this moment rests upon the full, clear, distinct realizing of this truth—that in that which entitles us to happiness there is not one thread of any robe of our own, not one atom of any possession of ours; we are saved, not by anything we are, or by anything we have done, or by anything we have suffered, but wholly, solely, exclusively, from the first pulse of the new life on earth to its first pulse in glory, by the finished righteousness and glorious sacrifice of the Son of God. He that knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. But in the second sense in which the word is used, we ought all of us, day by day, to be growing in worthiness of walking with Christ in white,—that is, in that spirit, temper, taste, perseverance, desire, aspira-

tion, prayer, which indicate that we have the same mind that was in Christ Jesus.

Let me ask you, then, Are you making progress in fitness for heaven? Does each succeeding Sabbath dawn with greater beauty on your homes? Are the chimes of its bells daily more musical to your ears? Is the service of the sanctuary more delightful than it ever was? Do you find in the Bible mines of gold, and stores of honey, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb? Can you say that you love the company, and study the interests of the people of God? Can you say, with all your faults, your short-comings, your sins, your infirmities, that you have grown in grace and in fitness for heaven? I can conceive no better test by which to try your fitness for this promise than your enjoyment of the Sabbath. Is it to you a day that is welcome because it enables you to walk more closely with Christ: or is it a day that you are thankful to see pass away? Do you feel it to be the brightest, and the best day of the seven? For what is the millennium but a Sabbath a thousand years long? It is the rest, the *sabbatismos*, that remaineth for the people of God. That man who has no delight in praise, nor in prayer, nor in hearing God's word explained, nor in studying God's truth, nor in such means as Christ commands and commends, gives too plain and palpable evidence that he wants that which will fit him for the kingdom of heaven. An unregenerate man would not be happy in the choirs of the blessed. The future state is less a locality, perhaps, and more a character. Plunge a saint into the depths of hell, and he will be secure and happy, as were Shadrach, Meshech, and Abed-nego, in the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Snatch a victim from the flames of the lost, lift him, and set him beside the throne of God, and the consuming and corroding agony of his curse would remain with all its stings and terrors still. It is not what is without us that makes heaven or hell; it is what is within us. The heart is the spring of misery or happiness; and according to what that heart is, "by nature fallen, or by grace regenerate," does man feel in happiness or misery. I ask you then, Are you becoming meet for the kingdom of heaven? Is your religion making you more happy, more victorious over the temptations, more patient in the trials, more re-

signed in the afflictions, more hopeful in the difficulties through which you have to pass? If it is doing so, bless him who has given it to you; pray that the Spirit of God would impress his sublime truths upon your hearts more deeply, and make his promises the music amid which you pass to the future world, and the performance and fulfilment of them the hope of the enjoyment that awaits you there.

LECTURE XXIII.

TRUE HONOUR AND RENOWN.

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”—REV. iii. 5.

I DESCRIBED the true state of the Church at Sardis when I addressed you on the words—“Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead:” the portrait of a formal Church, without spirit and without life: the semblance of the Church, the reality of the world—a statue, perfectly beautiful in all its proportions, but cold, without animation and without heart or mind. I then addressed you from the exhortation given to her—“Be watchful.” Christ had no pleasure in the ruin of that Church; he would rather rekindle the smouldering flax, and restore the broken reed: he therefore says to her, “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.” I then addressed you on the fourth verse—“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments.” I showed that even in the worst and darkest spiritual state into which a Church can fall, there are left some bright and beautiful exceptions. There was an Abraham in the land of Ur; there was a Job in the land of Uz; a Lot in the land of Sodom; and even when Elijah thought himself alone, there were seven thousand, invisible to him, but known to God, who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Even in the Church of Rome there is a people to whom are addressed the words, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

Those melancholy inscriptions which I read to you from the walls of the inquisition of Rome, show that the saints of God are murdered in the midst of her, and the inscriptions that they leave behind are evidences that even in that Church, as well as in others, are the people of God. If a Church had no saints in it, it would be perceived by all to be "salt that has lost its savour:" it is therefore because there is a remnant of living Christianity in the popedom, and because there are here and there scattered in the midst of it some of the confessing and witnessing people of God, that that Church is so dangerous, as a proselyting power on the one hand, and so long spared from the righteous judgments of God, upon the other. Yet true it is, that all this is in keeping with the aspects and facts of nature: there is not one lofty peak in the Alps or the Appenines, where the avalanche sleeps perpetually, on which there may not be gathered some sweet violet that the biting winds have not nipped, some crystal streamlet that the frosts have not hardened. So in the corrupted Church there are here and there two or three to show that in the most unpromising and unlikely circumstances God may have a people. The life of man is so constituted that he can live in almost any climate. There is a power of adaptation in the animal economy, which enables man to live under the equator or amid the polar frost of Greenland; and there is in spiritual life a power, not of adaptation, but of persistency and endurance from its communion with the fountain of life, which enables it to live even where we should suppose—

"All life must die; death live, and nature breed perverse
All monstrous, all abominable things."

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments;" and to them the promise is given, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." It is not multitude that gains the victory, but truth. The triumph over sin, the inheritance of the reward, is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." It is true in the history and experience of Christianity, that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;" the only conqueror is

the true Christian. He who overcomes is he who is conscious of weakness in himself, but of omnipotence in God. Who is he "that overcometh the world? He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." Such a conqueror overcomes, not enemies, but enmity; not opponents, but sin, the essence of opposition; and is more than conqueror through him that loved him.

But I have explained to you already who they are that overcome: I therefore turn to the promise—"Shall be clothed in white raiment." "White" was the symbol of the priestly office, according to the laws and institutes of Levi; and the promise, "He shall be clothed in white," is therefore equivalent to a promise that he shall officiate in the New Jerusalem and in the presence of the Lord as a priest before him. All true Christians, we are told in the Scripture, are priests even now. It is not the ministers of the Gospel who are priests, *ex officio*, though some think so, and others pretend to be so; but all truly converted men are "a chosen generation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood," and are therefore qualified to sing this song, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and our Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." There is not one single verse in the New Testament which authorizes the idea that a minister of the Gospel is officially, or in any sense, a sacrificing priest. It would be just as appropriate that the commander of an army should minister at the communion-table in the sanctuary, as that one who calls himself a sacrificing priest should officiate. Such a person is not in the catalogue of officers meant for the Church of God. All priests, strictly and literally such, passed away with the shadows of Levi, while the priesthood of Aaron, with its airy sacrifices, was absorbed in the priesthood of him who has an intransferable priesthood, and offered a final and perfect sacrifice. But if we are, in one sense as we are, priests, what do we do as priests? We do not offer up a propitiatory sacrifice; it is plain enough we need no propitiatory sacrifice to be offered up now; this Christ did once for all; but we offer up *spiritual* sacrifices on and by Christ the eternal altar; "To do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased." Again, praise is declared to be "the fruit

of the lips," and "a sacrifice." And again we are told to present ourselves "living sacrifices acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service." Christ's sacrifice was propitiatory; our sacrifices are spiritual and eucharistic. None may present, for it would be blasphemy to attempt it, a sacrifice the same as his; but all are called upon to present spiritual sacrifices as acceptable to God. Herein lies the lofty dignity, lent to the least act of a Christian. When he gives a halfpenny to the plate for spreading the everlasting Gospel, he does a priestly act—an act that is so welcome because it is the altar that sanctifies the offering; the gift is so precious in the estimate of heaven, whether it be a halfpenny or an hundred pounds, not because of its intrinsic value, but because it is the expression of the love of one who gives to Christ all the merit that he has, and who expects from Christ freely the blessing he has been taught to hope for. But in heaven, and in the future age to which the promise refers, it may be asked, What work will there be for priests to do? Man will be reinstated in the place he forfeited by sin; yea, in a yet more glorious place. He will then and there be "the eye of nature," to behold all its beauty; "the ear of nature," to hear its harmonies; "the heart of nature," to feel love to nature's God; and finally, "the priest of nature," to offer up the tribute of universal nature unto him that loved him, and washed him from his sins in his own blood, and made him a priest and a king unto God. Thus, then, they that overcome shall be "clothed in white raiment" and made priests unto God. But white, as I have explained before, was also a symbol of rank; thus the Roman patricians were clothed in white. The promise, therefore, that they "shall be clothed in white," is equivalent to a promise that they shall be raised to great dignity. How attractive is rank here! What will not some men endure, what will they not sacrifice in order to obtain a title, or to be raised to a rank and dignity they have not. And what is it when they have got it? an empty name that dies in the utterance; a circumstantial and perishable dignity that fades in the using. But if this be so desirable, such as it is, to men in this world, how desirable should be to us that lofty dignity, that lasting elevation, that pure and

ennobling grandeur, that is beyond the reach of taint, the possibility of decay, or liability to change or accident !

“He that overcometh” then “shall be clothed in white raiment.” Thus the royalties of David and the robes of Aaron, the dignity of kings and the sacredness of priests, the palms of victors and the robes of offerers, shall be the inheritance of those who overcome sin, and Satan, and the world, and are received into that rest that remaineth for the people of God. Blessed and beautiful hope ! May it encourage us to overcome ! May we know that whilst we are redeemed by grace, and by grace alone, there are rewards promised that vary, probably, in degree according to the progress that we make in conformity to Christ, and superiority to the world.

The next part of the promise is, “I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.” There are various allusions to this book scattered throughout the Bible ; let me mention two or three of them. One is contained in Daniel xii. “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people : and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time : and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written *in the book*.” You find an allusion to the very same book in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the Apostle tells us, “Ye are come unto Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly of the Church of the first-born *whose names are written in heaven* ;” the allusion being plainly to the book of life. You find another allusion to it in Revelation xx. “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened : and another book was opened, which *is the book of life*.” We find it also in chap. xxii. 19 : “And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part *out of the book of life*.” It may not be — no doubt it is not — a literal book in which are inscribed the names of all the saints of the Most High ; but it conveys the literal fact that the names of all that shall be saved from the commencement of the world to its close are enshrined in that memory in which there can be no forgetfulness, and entered upon those im-

mutable rolls from which they shall never perish. Perhaps, however, to say that their names are "written in the book of life" is just equivalent to saying, "the Lord knoweth them that are his;" or, "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world," not "because ye are holy," but "that ye may be holy."

It may be asked, Have we any means of reading that book, and ascertaining if our names are written there? Many have expressed a wish to do so if they could; but none ever saw it; no ear ever heard its contents; but the marks and characteristics of the saints of God, as these are spread over the sacred page, are just shadows of their names as these lie in the light of the countenance of the Lamb: they are just outlines, not yet filled up, of the saints whose names are registered in the Lamb's book of life. Character enunciated on earth is the reverberation of our name as it is sounded in heaven, and entered in the records of the skies. What are the successive verses of the Sermon on the Mount, but the echoes of the names of them who are written in the Lamb's book of life? In ascertaining if our names are written there, it is our duty not to pry into God's hidden book which no man can unseal, but to study God's open and revealed book, which every man that will, may clearly understand. Our study is not to be in the books of the upper sanctuary, but in the books of the lower sanctuary. Ours must be the habit not of striving to know what God has written of us in heaven, but of trying to feel and compare what God has made within and of us upon earth. We can never reach the tree of knowledge to pluck its leaves; but we may gather, even in this world, of the fruits of the tree of life. Such passages as these, for instance, contain the names of them that are written in the Lamb's book of life: "He that believeth on the Son of God"—it matters not what his rank, his name, his degree, his country, sex, or kindred, "hath eternal life." Again, "This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." And again, "The life that we live, we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us." He that trusts in Jesus as his sacrifice—he who is clothed with the righteousness of Jesus—he whose nature is assimilated to that of Jesus by the Spirit of God, may be as sure that his name is in the Lamb's

book of life, as if God were to take a leaf out of it and let it drop from the skies, or give it you as your treasure on which you could peruse your name.

But the promise is also added, "I will *not blot out* his name out of the book of life." Many very silly explanations have been given of this passage, and many foolish questions have been raised about it, as to whether it is possible for a Christian to fall finally? or, whether God may alter his decrees or not? Upon such questions the words convey no meaning, the one way or the other. I believe, that once saved, you are saved for ever. I believe, that he who is once regenerated by the Spirit of God, never again can fall back into his former condition. I believe that his faith may falter, his heart may faint; nay, he may fall into sins against his better feelings, out of which he will emerge; but if he is indeed united to the Lord Jesus Christ by living faith, he himself tells us nothing shall be able to separate us from him: but, says he, "I give unto them eternal life, and none shall be able to pluck them out of my hand."

Then, what is meant by the expression, "I will not blot out his name?" It is just that negative which conveys the strongest possible affirmation: it is equivalent to, "I will watch over the glorious record; I will take care it shall never be blotted out: let your name perish where it may, it shall live there; let your interests be betrayed where they may, they shall not be betrayed there. So far from blotting out your name, I will write it there, I will retain it there, and nothing shall be able even to overshadow, still less to blot out or to expunge it." It is just like that promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee:" that does not mean that Christ may ever leave or forsake us; but it is the strongest affirmation that he will never leave us, but will ever take care of and protect us. This teaches us that the stars may fall from the skies, the flowers fade from the earth, the rivers cease to flow, the sea to heave, all human records may be obliterated, all names graven on monumental brasses may be destroyed—names that are cut into the stones of proud mausolea may be expunged, names which have made the hearts of mankind to tremble, and have smitten with fear the nations of the world, the names of Cæsar, of Napoleon, or of Alexander, may perish

from the earth and leave not a rack or an echo behind them; but the name of the meanest saint who is united to his Lord by living faith, shall be radiant in that book, and become brighter by the lapse of years, and dearer to Christ by the trials through which he has passed in overcoming the world and the things of the world. Your names then, people of God, shall remain for ever; your interests are where thieves cannot steal nor robbers break through. Years that wear out other names, and time that overshadows all things below, shall reveal in brighter lustre, and in greater glory the names of them who have overcome and are the saints and the people of God. Blessed promise!—promise which is “yea, and amen” in Christ Jesus. And if this be so, it is a very light thing where your name may be expunged on earth. It may be blotted out from the books of the world; but what matters it? It may be expunged from the rolls of corrupt and worldly churches; what matters it? “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye.” It may be covered with a thousand blots; it may be written over with a thousand calumnies—it may, like Luther’s, be denounced as the name of a heretic: but when the fumes of passion shall have all passed away, and the records of all lands shall be laid bare before God, it will be found that the name that has perished is that of the proud persecutor, and that the name which is in the Lamb’s book of life is the name of the persecuted one.

But it may be asked, Why will not Christ blot out a Christian’s name out of the book of life? I answer, not because of our merits. These, God knows, are “few and far between.” It is not our desert that wrote it there; it is not our desert that retains it there: and oh! blessed be his name, it is not our want of desert and our unfaithfulness to him, which we confess and mourn over and ask forgiveness for, that shall be able to blot it out there. What then was it that placed it there? and why is it that he will not blot it out? I answer, not our love to Christ, but Christ’s love to us. Were the permanence of our name in the Lamb’s book of life contingent upon our love to Christ, it would have been blotted out long ere now; but it is retained there in spite of our sins! it is retained there by the same love that wrote it there—by the sovereign love of him who loved us in our ruin and

washed us from our sins in his own blood. If once written there it is indelible; "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life."

Surely the discovery of this truth should be our greatest comfort! All things around us are plainly convulsed. Names rendered venerable by the lapse of years are passing away from the lips of mankind; things ancient and revered are being placed in the crucible and recast; institutions which were thought established most firmly are being shattered as by the throes and explosions of successive earthquakes—all things indicate the approach of a crisis when everything will be made new. Life has come to have a greater uncertainty and precariousness than ever, because the seventh vial is poured into the air and has tainted it with its terrible miasma; the springs of earthly comfort are being dried up—the sources of our earthly joys are all departing: how important it is that we should cease to look to the broken cisterns that perish in the using, and that we should draw strength and comfort from the fountain of living waters, from the blessed fact that our names are written where they cannot be blotted out, and watched over by the Shepherd of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps! "In this rejoice not, that the devils are subject to you; but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

But our Lord adds more: not only does he say, "I will not blot it out," but he says, "I will confess it before my Father and before his angels." We confess his name upon earth as our Saviour; he will confess our name in the skies as his people. And surely, if one sound can be heard more musical than another, then, it will be that of our names pronounced by those lips which said once upon earth—"Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Have you ever noticed in this world that one man will so pronounce to you the very humblest name, that it will sound as if it were the exponent of the loftiest aristocracy, and another man will so pronounce the loftiest name that it will sound positively mean? How grand will our names sound when the lips of Jesus shall announce them! What a thrill of ecstasy will vibrate in every heart, when the name that some caricatured, others misrepresented, more maligned,

shall be declared by him who shall add, as the sequel to the utterance of it, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." When that day comes, when these names shall be uttered and confessed by Jesus, what disappointments will there be! Names canonized by popes and worshipped by crowds shall not be heard; names that floated down the currents of the world, and sounded in endless echoes along the corridors of time, as the noble, the beautiful, the brave, shall not be heard. Names that grew into household words, as those of the world's benefactors, shall not be mentioned. Names that we expected would be almost the key-notes of the songs of heaven shall be passed by. On the other hand, names new to us, that we never read in the newspaper, nor heard of in the lists of this world—whose bearers have emerged from lanes and alleys, and miserable and destitute places which breathed the plague—names too, that like violets by the roadside, which are only to be seen when the winds and the rains have beaten down the tall rank grass that grew over and concealed them—names that were sneered at and ridiculed by the leaders of the world, and the exemplars of Christianity, shall be heard at that day, the most musical and glorious of all, though not many mighty, not many noble, not many great shall be among the inheritors of the kingdom of God and of his Christ.

My dear friends, let me ask, Are your names written in the Lamb's book of life? It is easy to answer that question. Is your character inscribed in the Bible, and inscribed with eulogy? Will your names be confessed by Christ? Do you confess Christ now? it is often a difficult task to do so; but what duty is not encased in suffering? If you expect to go through the world without difficulties or obstructions, you forget where you are. This is the Church militant; we are in the world, but not of it; we are soldiers at war, and shall be victors that will overcome; and if we confess Christ now, he also will confess us before his Father which is in heaven.

In concluding my lecture upon this Church, — the Church of Sardis, — let me observe, how poor and insignificant will all the rank, and pomp, and splendour of this world appear to him who is an inheritor of the glorious reward that awaits the people of

God! How pale will seem to you the lawn, the purple, and the ermine, if you are a candidate for those white robes which the Son of God will give to all them that love him; "Set your affections on things that are above," and things that are below will grow paler and dimmer, and dwindle down into their intrinsic insignificance. That man whose heart is filled with heaven, looks down upon earth, not indeed with contempt, but with cold indifference. He feels that he is a candidate for a nobler prize, that he is a traveller to a more precious land; and all of the world that he wants is to pluck a flower here and there as he passes; and to feel, yet more, that the sooner he is at his home, his journey is the sooner done and his struggle the sooner finished. The only way to make you love this world less is the true way of trying to make you love the next world more. Men will not cease to love the world because the minister preaches against it. I should never make the grasp of avarice relax, or the heart of the miser melt, by preaching against the love of money; but the way to do it is, to bring the higher affection by its contact to supplant the lower. The way to dissolve the earthly preference is to bring to bear the heavenly preference. Man's heart cannot be empty: one must pursue some object ardently, and all but exclusively; and the only way to dislodge a mean or corrupt passion, and to put it beneath your feet, is to show you the glory of the nobler and the purer object—the heavenly will put out the earthly, as the sunbeams falling on the brightest fire soon extinguish it.

In the next place, let me observe, how poor is all earthly fame and renown, compared with the renown of having our names confessed in heaven! We find that men will encounter the greatest dangers, undergo the greatest hardships, perform the most toilsome labours, make the greatest sacrifices, in order to obtain what they call a great name. And after all what is the use of it? It is just like collecting loaves and laying them on their tombstones, when they cannot eat them. If a reputation of a posthumous kind be desirable, it is that reputation which makes the world mourn that it has lost a benefactor, and the Church grieve it has parted with an ornament. Any reputation besides is vain and

paltry, and unworthy of the ambition of a rational man, still less of a Christian.

And lastly, my dear friends, let us know that we shall be thus honored and thus clothed, not because our names are in the Lamb's book of life, but because Christ loves us, and we love him as a response to that love. Some men have a sort of stereotyped Christianity; they think in this way:—"I am chosen to eternal life; I am predestinated; I am sure that my name is in the Lamb's book of life." Where they obtained the knowledge does not trouble them; they profess to have this knowledge, and then they say, "I need not mind much how I live; I need not care much how I act—all is safe." Would it be auspicious reasoning if a wife were to say,—“I know that my husband has taken me for better and worse, and that he must provide for me, because the law of the land says so: our tie is indissoluble; I have the wedding-ring on my finger, I may therefore act as I please without consulting his wishes or his happiness.” The husband would have no great opinion of such a wife. She should believe that her husband loved her, and therefore she was safe, and for this reason alone; and we are to believe that our state for ever—our names not being erased from the book of life, is not because they are stereotyped, fixed there, and not to be broken,—but because he that loved us from the first, loves us to the end, and none shall be able to pluck us out of his hand.

The following is the most recent description of Sardis:—

Sardis, the metropolis of the region of Lydia, in Asia Minor, is situated near mount Tmolus, between thirty and forty miles east from Smyrna. It was celebrated for great opulence and for the voluptuous and debauched manners of its inhabitants. Considerable ruins attest the ancient splendour of this once celebrated capital of Cræsus and the Lydian Kings. It is now reduced to a wretched village called Sart, consisting of a few mud huts, inhabited by Turkish herdsmen. A great portion of the ground once occupied by this imperial city, is now a smooth grassy plain, browsed over by the sheep of the peasants or trodden by the camels of the caravan, and only a few disjointed pillars and the crumbling rock of the Acropolis remain to point out the site of its glory. The ruins are more entirely gone to decay than in

most of the ancient cities in those parts. No Christians reside on the spot. Two Greek servants of a Turkish miller were the only representatives of the Church of Sardis in 1826. Its present state affords a striking illustration of the accomplishment of the prophetic denunciation against the Church in that city—"a name to live while dead."

LECTURE XXIV.

THE KEY OF DAVID AND THE OPEN DOOR.

"And to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."
—REV. iii. 7, 8.

THE Lord Jesus is plainly the sublime personage who here introduces himself as the holy, the true, the possessor of the key of David. Isaiah beheld his glory while he worshipped, and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts." The "Holy One of Israel" is not only his name, but it is the sublime prerogative which he claims for himself. "Thou wilt not suffer thine 'Holy One' to see corruption," is the epithet bestowed by the Father upon the Son. Christ was holy as God, holy as man. The highest holiness that man can reach is a borrowed holiness; the holiness of Christ was aboriginal, underived, and full of glory. He describes himself here as "the True One." The "True" is also a frequent epithet of Christ in Scripture:—"That we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ;" and he says of himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Christ is the truth of all literature, of all science, and philosophy. Every prophecy finds in him its performance as the truth. Every promise provokes in him its echo; for he is its truth. All the precepts and doctrines of Christianity have in him their roots, coherence and unity. He is the key that unlocks all God's dispensations in the history of the past—all the mysteries inscrutable to man that envelope us in the present,—from whom

too the future shall have all its glory and light. He is "the Holy One, the True One, and hath the key of David, and openeth, and no man shutteth."

The expression here used is plainly an allusion to the language of Isaiah,—or rather of God, speaking by the mouth of Isaiah,—when he says of Eliakim, "I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house." This is evidently a prediction of Christ as having "the key of David."

The door that is here spoken of is a figure employed in Scripture in a variety of senses. For instance, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, we hear the apostle describing the opportunity of preaching the Gospel thus, "A great door and effectual is opened to me." Again, in 2 Cor. xi. 12, he says, "Furthermore, when I came to Troas, to preach Christ's Gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord." Whatever then be the meaning of that door—and it may have various meanings—Christ is the key that opens it. Is there wanted a door? or rather, is there now no door that is not shut to the spread of the everlasting Gospel in heathen lands? Each door Christ points out to the ministers of the cross, and opens it by that mysterious key that hangs at his girdle; so that thereby the Gospel shall have free course, and be glorified; and when he discloses and opens such a door, "no man can shut it." Who was it that opened a door in the isles of the Pacific, till those isles brightened into gems reflecting the glory of the Lord upon the bosom of the deep? He that hath the key of David. Who opened a door unexpectedly in the walls of China, leading inward to the very heart of that empire, and furnishing access there to the preachers of the Gospel? Who has opened a door in Rome itself for the circulation of the word of God and the preaching of the glorious Gospel? Not chance; not the Autocrat by his armies; not the mob in the *áγορά* by its voice; but He who rules amid the nations, and reigns in provi-

dence, and "worketh hitherto," — "He that hath the key of David, and openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."

But Christ does not merely open a door among nations for the spread of the Gospel: he does more; and without doing more, the opening of a door would be ineffectual. He opens the door in the human heart for the entrance of the Gospel. We have a beautiful allusion to this in the Acts of the Apostles, where it is said, "The Lord opened the heart of Lydia." In vain is the Gospel preached with the most persuasive eloquence; in vain is it proclaimed amid circumstances propitious to its spread, and presenting encouragement to its friends; in vain does it gain a momentary ascendancy over man's mind;—unless the Lord shall scatter the prejudices that cloud the mind, and eradicate the passions that encrust the heart, and make a door into its inmost recesses, its sound shall prove only as the tinkling cymbal and the sounding brass, and its effects momentary as the morning cloud and the early dew.

Christ opens a door to us for the descent of the forgiveness of sin. Through him alone can it reach us. Here perhaps is the opportunity for the explanation of a popular misapprehension. Christ's death was not designed, nor is it now meant, to make God have mercy upon those on whom he would otherwise have let forth his wrath; but Christ's death was intended to open a door for the egress of that love which viewed us from everlasting ages, and having loved us from the first, loves us even to the last. In other words, the death of Christ was not the Genesis of a love in God that was not previously there, but it was the opening a door for the egress of a love that was eternally there. It is not the proposition of the Bible, that Christ died that God might love us; but that God loved us, and therefore Christ died for us: hence one of the most beautiful lights in which you can look at that death is, as a provision for the egress of the love of God in full consistency with the demands of his justice, the pledges of his truth, and the exactions of his holiness: so that in that door, God's justice is the threshold, God's mercy and love are the lintels and the door-posts; and those very attributes, which, without an atonement, would naturally have obstructed and resisted,

to speak humanly, the egress of God's love towards sinners, have now become, in consequence of that atonement, the wide door, the open channel through which God's love may flow in full tide, and not cease to flow until the earth is covered with its expression as the waters cover the channels of the mighty deep.

Another allusion to "the door" in Scripture, is found in the expression, a "door of hope." Such a door is opened to us in the Gospel. Christianity is not only food for faith, but a basis for hope. Take away the Gospel, and man would be, what the apostle proclaims him to be by nature, "without God and without hope in the world;" *i. e.* he might look for prosperity or progress upon earth, but he could look for no unspeakable glory, no happy and blessed home, when time and the world shall be no more.

The metaphor "door" is also used in Scripture to denote an escape from trials. We read in Scripture of "a door of deliverance." Christ has the key of that door. When, for instance, the flood poured forth upon the world of old, God opened the door of the ark for Noah to enter in, "and"—it is a beautiful idea—"the Lord then shut him in:" and when he opened and shut, none could reverse it. When the Israelites groaned under the oppression of Pharaoh, in the land of Rahab of old, God opened to them a door of deliverance. When Abraham was on Mount Moriah, prepared to sacrifice his first-born at the bidding of God, "He that hath the key of David" opened a door of glorious and consistent escape. When Jacob exclaimed, in the agony of his heart, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away also; all these things are against me;" God opened a door through which he saw that all these things were for him, and were destined to promote his temporal and eternal good. We read also of the expression in Scripture, of a "door of utterance:" Col. iv. 3,—"that God would open a door of utterance;" as if to teach us that God alone can inspire a minister to speak, not only what is true, but what shall be powerful, impressive, edifying. Many dispute about the comparative merits of various systems of ecclesiastical machinery. One man says, patronage is best; another, that popular election is best; another, that neither the one nor the other is best, but that a compromise between them is the most expedient. Perhaps, one system of

machinery is better than another ; but let us recollect that neither Christians nor Christian ministers can be made, like broadcloth, by any machinery which the genius of man can construct. Let us remember that neither bishops nor presbyters can make a minister, though they may point out and designate one divinely made. "He that hath the key of David, and openeth, and no man shutteth," can alone open a heart to receive the truth, and open lips to express the truth. It is not the votes of the people, nor is it the presentation of the patron, that will secure an evangelical minister : and probably, if the people prayed more and wrangled less, and if churches argued less about machinery, and inculcated from the pulpit, and breathed from the pew, prayer to him who "has the key of David, and opens, and no man shuts ; and shuts, and no man opens," there would be fewer cold pulpits, and careless hearers, and retrograde communions, and dying churches, and departing glory.

Christ has the key that opens the door of the grave. Blessed and glorious truth ! He entered it himself, and in the beautiful language of an ancient hymn, "when he had overcome the sharpness of death, he opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." The grave has changed its aspect since the Saviour slept in it. Its darkness has been dispelled, its chains have been broken, its terrors are at an end. It has now ceased to be a "sepulchre," and has become the cemetery—the *κοιμητήριον*, the sleeping or resting place—of the bodies of the saints of God : and over every grave in which a believer lies, let that believer be smitten down by plague or pestilence or famine, there is hung a glorious rainbow ; and it may be engraved, not as the conjecture of rash belief, or the expression of faint hope, but as the solemn conviction of hearts that believe and know it, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works"—not "do precede" them, for that would be giving them merit ; but "their works do follow them ;" for that is the evidence of their previous acceptance in Christ.

But let us notice that Christ, by one of those strange and apparently paradoxical statements which we frequently meet with in Scripture, is not only said to have the key, but to be himself "the door." No one figure is adequate to express the fulness of

Christ. He, therefore, not only has the key, but he says, "I am the door;" and again, "I am the way;" and again, "John saw in heaven a door." There is no other door of admission to heaven; or, to vary the phraseology, "there is none other name given among men, whereby we can be saved." Now, what is the use of a door? It is the legal entrance to the house. To see a man entering your house by the window would naturally lead you to suspect that he was a thief and an intruder. The door is the proper entrance; and so Christ is the only entrance and legal access to God, to heaven, and to an everlasting home. The door of primeval innocence by which Adam for a few moments approached to the holy place, has been closed amid the wreck of paradise; and no man can remove the bars that enclose it, and point it out again as the way of access to God. The door of admission by human merit never was opened in the past, and never will be opened in the future; for it is written upon every wall of the heavenly Jerusalem, "By deeds of law no man living can be justified." A door of entrance by human suffering, or by any expiation of ours, is a door that men have often tried, but have always failed to reach ever as they attempted it. All the tears of saints need to be washed in the blood of Jesus; all the merits of saints need to be forgiven through the righteousness of Jesus. Nothing that man can suffer can be an expiation for the least transgression,—nothing man can pay can be purchase-money for the least tittle of heaven's happiness, or for the least ray of heaven's light. Nor is there any door of admission into heaven by the priest, the sacrament, the ceremony, the Church, the ecclesiastical rite. Ministers may admit you to the visible Church, or to the communion table, or to the baptismal font; but there their power ends; it cannot reach beyond this world. No "Open, sesame," in others can unfold the gates of glory: the minister and the people must bow together and seek admission at that door, at which if we knock, it shall be opened; at which if we stand and seek, we shall find; at which if we ask, we shall assuredly obtain.

Then let us rejoice that Christ is thus the way to heaven, and also that no man cometh unto the Father but by him. There is no other way—no way that nature can unfold, or science discover,

or money purchase, or merit secure, or perseverance make. There is but one way of salvation, and that is Christ Jesus : and if so, is not that man in peril — in imminent peril — who is seeking to get to heaven by any other way ? For instance, the Roman Catholic seeks to rise to heaven by a combination of saints, angels, human merit, priestly sacrifices, ecclesiastical absolution, and such like. Now, what can you say of such a man ? You do not say of A, You are lost for ever, or of B, You are eternally condemned ; but this you do say, That if you attempt to get to heaven by any other way than that which Christ has explained in the Bible, you never can arrive there at all ; for he has himself said, “ No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” In the geography of this world there are many ways to the same place : in the geography of the higher world, there is but one way to the one place. If I wish to go from here to Edinburgh, I may go by steamer, or by railroad, or on horseback, or on foot, or by coach. I may go by the Eastern or the Western line ; or I may go by neither, but between them ; and, in short, if any one were to ask me, “ Which way shall I go to Edinburgh ? ” I would say, “ Take the way which suits your purse, your convenience, and your taste most.” But if you ask me, Why, then, may not every man take his own way to heaven ? here is alike the reason and the difference. If there were some dozen of ways to heaven, then let every man take his own : but God himself has pronounced with the explicitness of an oracle, that there is but one way to heaven ; and he who walks out of that way, however near to it he may walk, misses the only way, and therefore acceptance before God, and so an entrance into glory.

Let us recollect then, that the only door is that declared in the Gospel, and that the key which opens it is in the possession of him who “ opens, and no man shuts ; ” and blessed be the name of our God for ever that it is so ! “ Let us fall into the hands of the Lord ; ” if the key were at the girdle of Pío Nono, we should all be excluded. If the key that opens that gate hung at the girdle of the most sainted man upon earth, many good men would prejudice, and passion, and party pique, exclude from it. But we rejoice to know that no man can shut what Christ has opened, and that while the minister may tell you the excellence

of the way, the beauty of the way, the exclusiveness of the way, the necessity of the way, all the ministers of all the Churches in Christendom cannot shut that which Christ has opened, nor open what he has shut. It stands perpetually open, accessible to all, repelling none. Be thankful, my dear friends, and cherish it as the first lesson of Protestantism, that there is nothing between the greatest sinner and a reconciled God, but that sinner's suspicion of God's love, that sinner's unwillingness to go to God's bosom. And let us know that this door is not to be opened by man's tears, but that it is ever open, and we have nothing to do, to suffer, to sacrifice, to give, but to arise, and by Christ, the door, go to our Father, and have perfect peace with him through Jesus Christ.

But he that has the key, and opens, and no man shuts, gives this Church a character on which I would dwell for a very few minutes. It is this—"Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." This strength is plainly not spiritual strength, which is here meant. He does not convey the impression that this Church was spiritually feeble, but that she was physically, numerically, fiscally feeble: that is to say, there were no rich men to adorn her pews; there were no large and crowded congregations to give excitement to the hearer and stimulus to the feelings of the preacher. Little was given at her collections; though that little was the expression of hearts that were touched by the grace of God. There was nothing in the edifice in which her people worshipped, there was nothing in the circumstances under which they met, that could charm the eye, captivate the senses, or attract the approbation of the world. "Thou hast a little strength;" but, little as that strength may be, though outwardly feeble, thou art inwardly strong. Though poor in this world, thou art rich in grace; though there are no great men in the midst of thee, there are, what is better, good men; and though thy influence in this world be small, yet thou hast influence, where influence is mighty, with God the Father, through Jesus Christ his Son. And, as the evidence of this, "Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Here is a precedent, a precept, an example for us. My dear brethren, the great duty of the day, the great necessity of the

crisis at this moment is, "to keep God's word." Man's word alone is scepticism; man's word mingled with God's word, superstition; God's word alone is the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation. It is Christ's word: and how is it his word? Its preceptive part is his; for we can only obey in his strength: its doctrinal part is his; for he is the Alpha and the Omega of every doctrine: its promissory part is his; for all the promises are "in him yea and amen:" its prophetic part is his; for he gave the spirit of prophecy and superintends the performance of prophecy. It is Christ's word: his name, superscription and image are struck upon its every page; and there is nothing of man's in it except where it is so declared. It is the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

But how, it may be asked, are we to keep this word? Keep it first as a solemn and deliberate conviction in your heads—settle it in your judgments, that this book is God's book, that this volume is from above. When you have once clearly settled this conviction in your minds, do not let the hammer of the geologist, or the crucible of the chemist, dislodge it. The true way is, make up your mind that the Bible is true, upon its own appropriate evidence,—evidence easy of access and singularly conclusive: and when you have done so, lay aside in your mind this fact as a fixed and settled conviction not to be disturbed; and when some geologist brings up some new and extraordinary fossil from the bowels of the earth, and tells you it proves that the Mosaic account of the creation is a fable, you must answer "The greater probability is that your discovery is a blunder; this fact I have settled on the clearest evidence, that the book of Genesis is the word of God." Do not tremble when some one comes from soaring amid the stars, or excavating the earth, or diving in the sea, and tells you he has found something which proves Christianity to be untrue and the Bible uninspired. Why should a believer in God's word quake and tremble when man's word assails it? Settle it in your minds, I say, on the clearest evidence, that the Bible is God's book; and when you have done so, say to the geologist, the astronomer, or the metaphysician who would persuade you otherwise, "My mind is fixed—my conviction is complete: I am quite sure that your discovery,

if it agrees not with God's word, will be found on maturer investigation to be a misapprehension; or that what seem now to be contradictory, your phenomena and my Bible, are only two lines which appear to be perfectly parallel, and which, if so, would never meet; yet, though at present unnoticed by us, a little further inspection will show that there is a slight inclination in the one, and, however slight, they must meet and blend together in the end." Depend upon it that revelation, science, and providence, are all lines proceeding from the same source, and will all return and meet and mingle in the fountain from which they originally proceeded. Settle it, therefore, in your minds, that the Bible is true: "Keep my word" as the conviction of your judgment—as a settled and an immovable fact.

In the second place, keep this word of Christ in your memory. Store your memory with living seed, and there will be no room for chaff to enter. Let not the fumes of passion conceal it; let not the waves of the world expunge it; let not the tread of this world's traffic destroy it; but keep ever nearest, dearest, closest to your heart, this great fact lodged in your memory—"God's word is truth."

"Keep it," in the next place, as the joy of your heart's innermost affections. "Thy word," says the psalmist, "have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." We shall never keep a thing tenaciously, until we love that thing heartily. Love is the strongest tie upon earth. What one loves strongly, one is sure to hold firmly. If you have been taught by God's Holy Spirit to love God's blessed book, and to love it because it has been light cast upon your difficulties, and calm on your troubles, and peace amid your despondencies and fears—then, having hid it in your heart, you will keep that word as not the least precious possession.

"Keep it," in the next place, in your walk, your life, and your daily conversation. Show to the world that the Bible is not a dead and dry document, which, like an ancient parchment, you keep as a curiosity; but that it is a living, plastic principle, which transforms, illuminates, elevates, and sanctifies your whole walk and conversation and life. Show the world that the Christian is a man not merely with the Bible in his pocket, but a man with

the Bible transferred by a better than daguerreotype process to his heart, his conscience, and his daily walk.

“Be,” and not “seem;” “love,” and not simply “believe.” Let the world see, on the exchange, in the warehouse, in the shop, the senate, the home, that you are better merchants, better fathers, better husbands, better citizens, better legislators, because the Bible was written, and Christianity has been made known to you. Keep that word in spite of Satan who would steal it, in spite of man who would corrupt it, in opposition to the Socinian who would subtract from it much that is divine, and of the Romanist who would add to it much that is human. Keep it as your compass in a tempestuous sea; as the pole star when you wander in the pathless desert; as the chart that gives you the outline of your glorious home, and your way thither, — till you come to that state where the chart, the pole star, and the compass shall be useless, because then the Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof.

And lastly, says the Saviour to this Church, notwithstanding your little strength, “Thou hast not denied my name.” This is equivalent to, “Thou hast not been ashamed of the Gospel.” How extraordinary it is, let me just add in conclusion, that any man upon earth should be ashamed of the Gospel! Did you ever see a beautiful woman ashamed of her beauty? or hear of a rich man being ashamed of his wealth? Did you ever hear of a clever man being ashamed of his talent, or a shrewd man of business anxious to hide the fact that he was so? Do you not find, on the contrary, that natural men, so wise in their generation, are so far from being ashamed of their gifts, that they rather take pride in them more than they should, and glory in them, and take the greatest care that they shall be widely and thoroughly known? Then how comes it to pass that men are ashamed of nothing that is beautiful, or precious, or valuable below; yet that they are ashamed of that beside which all the riches of Cræsus are but so much dross which might be grasped thus — in comparison with which all the honour of the world is but show, and the life of the world is but a vapour, and the fame of the world is but an empty echo? Disclaim, noblemen, your rank; literary men, your talent; rich men, your wealth; beautiful women, your beauty: but oh!

deny not, nor disclaim, nor be ashamed of that which has raised woman to her loftiest dignity—given man his purest and his brightest hopes—transformed every bye-way of individual life, and every high-way of public being; be not ashamed of that which teaches you infinity is your home—eternity your lifetime—the Son of God your Saviour, and the Holy One of Israel your exceeding great and unspeakable reward. Be not ashamed of that name “which is above every name”—that name which was commenced at Antioch, and shall not cease to be musical and glorious when time shall be no more—that name before which angels prostrate themselves, and at which every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Christ is all and in all—that name which shall be engraven on the earth as on the Lord’s redeemed and brightest jewel—whose letters shall also be the stars in the sky—whose sound shall be the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunders: “Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” Amen.

LECTURE XXV.

HOLD FAST.

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”—REV. iii. 11.

IN looking at the command expressed in the text, the first question which arises is, What are we to hold fast? At the Reformation the Christians were called, as you will find in Fox’s “Martyrs,” the “hold fasts.” They were so distinguished for their holding with a firm grasp the great truths that they loved. Let us then inquire, what we are to hold fast. Some things you are to hold very loosely indeed, and other things very lightly. Your life you do hold very loosely; you know not when it may be taken from you. Your rank, your estate, you may hold loosely; none of these are yours; you are but stewards of them; these are God’s, and he takes them when, where, and how he pleases. Other things you must hold very lightly. Hold lightly, if you like, the Prayer Book, but not the Bible; hold lightly, if you like, the Established Church, but not the Church of Christ; hold lightly, if you like, form, ceremony, rite, for all these things, however valuable, are not vital,—but hold fast other things which are infinitely precious, the adjuration of which is the renunciation of our life. Some things, then, we are to hold very loosely indeed; other things we may hold very lightly indeed; but some things we are to hold fast at all cost and sacrifice, and whatever be the inconvenience that attends our doing so. Let me mention some of these things.

The first thing that occurs to me which you are to hold fast, because of its intrinsic excellence and value, as well as its bear-

ing on us and our progress, is the Bible, the word of God, the directory of life, the rule of faith. It is always first assailed or undermined or stolen : it must be first secured. "Hold fast" your Bible. "The Bible alone is the religion of Protestants." It is the charter of your rights, the depository of your duties, the palladium of your safety. Let the priest shut the Bible, and depend upon it the politician will soon burn the Magna Charta. Let the priest get your conscience under his control, and the tyrant will soon seize your liberties and put them at his disposal. That people who hold fast the Bible never can be slaves ; the people that let go the Bible never can long remain free : yet these, precious though they be, are but its temporal blessings. It is the great ensign beneath which humanity has ever found a champion, freedom its firmest footing, and religion has built its holiest altar. There is not a babe on its mother's knee, that is not better because that book has been written ; there is not a soul in this land, even the most miserable and forlorn, that has not in it some bright rays because this blessed book has been written and inspired by the Spirit of God.

You cannot fail to see that the book which has made so deep and so wide an impression upon the world, cannot be a book that is from man. The greatest books that have ever proceeded from the pen of man, emit transient and momentary gleams, meteor-like, and are forgotten ; but this book gives names to our children, consecration to our weddings, and comfort at our graves. It is the substance of the conversation of our streets, the basis of our laws, the strength of our constitution ; its theology is the everyday conversation of our tradesmen in their shops, of our workmen at their looms. There is not an acre of the earth that is not altered because the Bible was written ; and there is not a throne that is not rendered more secure than it would otherwise have been because associated with that book ; and there is not a nation upon earth that has not, directly or indirectly, derived from its inexhaustible stores, innumerable temporal, national, and social blessings. Let not the skeptic snatch it from you ; let not the Socinian mutilate it ; let not the Romanist corrupt it. It is God's great gift to you ; hold it fast, till he that wrote it comes himself to you, or takes you to himself. The Bible ! how rich

and sacred are its blessings! the only rule of our faith, the great foundation of our hope. Yet it is not a book which contains theories for clever men to discuss or great men to dispute about; but truths for all men to receive as from God.

This blessed book is the only rule of faith and practice. Do not, therefore, mind what men say about the Bible, but observe what the Bible says about men. Whatever this book repudiates, is heresy; whatever it rebukes, is sin; whatever it is silent on, is not essential to our salvation. Now, just recollect these three distinctions. Whatever this book rebukes, is sin; whatever this book repudiates, is heresy; and whatever this book is silent on, (I care not how excellent it may be,) cannot be essential to our salvation. Those questions and disputes about form and ceremony that agitate the visible Church are non-essential, because the Bible is silent about them. It is a book for the people: for their good, their improvement, their joy. The great deception practised during the dark ages was this—that the Bible was a book for the clergy, and not for the laity. What was the grand fact taught at the Reformation? That the Bible is the people's own book; it was written for them, it is meant for them. It is God's fatherly voice sounding from the skies, and speaking to his own children. It is his paternal encyclical to his own family. My dear friends, let no interdict stand between you and that book, or dare to limit or control your perusal of it. God has enfranchised you, and man may not disfranchise you. It is your right, it is your privilege, to take that book and open it, and read it, and learn the way to your Father's presence and to the love of your Father's heart. Let not even the shadow of a bishop or an archbishop, or even of a pope, stand between you and that blessed book, or in any degree darken its page. When Duns Scotus, or angelic doctors, or seraphic doctors, or councils, or fathers, or priests come to you and proffer their help, tell them to remain at the bottom of the mount while you ascend to its sunlit height alone, and hear your dear Father speak to you in his own sweet and confiding tones. "I wish to hear God for himself, and he has bid me open this blessed book, where he speaks to me in his own words, and rejoices my heart, and illuminates my mind, guides me to heaven, and leads me back again to himself."

Hold fast the Bible as the great rule of faith. Contact with human books may humanize; contact with a divine book exalts, spiritualizes, glorifies. Valuable as articles may be, valuable as confessions of faith may be, valuable as catechisms are — never, never make them substitutes for the Bible. The difference between a catechism and the Bible is just the difference between a book with pictures of flowers and tables of their botanical arrangement, and the beautiful garden or nursery fragrant with the aroma of flowers and glorious with their thousand tints. The human compendium is the artificial gas; God's book is the pure atmosphere of heaven. To hold fast the Bible is a vital point: what is beyond it, you may dispute; what is outside it, you may disregard, but cleave to and hold fast that which is within it. It is your life: it is your peace below; it is your happiness above: it is your all. You cannot be too decided or determined that you will hold fast the Bible, though all popes should curse you — though all infidels should laugh at you — though the whole world should point the finger at you — though it should cost you your property, your life, yet hold fast the Bible as your only rule of faith.

Such is my first prescription; and my second is like unto it: "Hold fast" Christ and him crucified. Justification by faith in his precious blood is the great, prominent, and distinctive dogma that gives its colouring, its tone, its shape, to all the truths of theology, to all the contents of this blessed book. This great truth, as you perceive by the lesson or chapter which we read this evening, is not a mere doctrine that occurs here and disappears there, and that may be overlooked or laid aside; it is the very trunk of Christianity, and all other doctrines are but branches; it is the very pith and substance of the Gospel, and other doctrines as parasites that feed on it; it is its Alpha and its Omega, its core, its centre, its circumference. Patriarchs anxiously expected its manifestation — prophets predicted it, evangelists have recorded it, martyrs died for it, and they all, with one consent, give utterance to their feelings substantially in those simple, but sublime words, "God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of Christ Jesus our Lord."

Let justification by faith alone in the righteousness of Christ perish from your creed, and cease to form the foundation of your faith and your hope; let it once occupy a subordinate place, or cease to occupy the supremacy and sovereignty, and all your views will become confused, your confidence in God will be shaken—you will tremble when a leaf falls—you will be afraid that you shall be lost for ever when failings and infirmities occur, and your life will be a life of doubt and wretchedness, because a life of want of confidence and trust in God. But let this truth strike its roots into your souls, and become part and parcel of all your religion, that you are justified, not by anything you are, nor by anything you do, nor by anything you can pay, but wholly, at the day of death, as now in the midst of life, by the finished righteousness of Christ in our stead—"Then let the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea, and let the earth shake with the swelling thereof"—God, you feel, is your refuge, and therefore you shall not be afraid; the Lord will help you, and that right early. Surrender not then this truth; hold it fast, in heart, in conscience, in life—the article, as Luther called it, of a standing or a falling Church. That arch, of which this is not the key-stone, will soon crumble; that superstructure of which this is not the foundation will soon fall; and that Christian will have neither a consistent nor a happy life, whose confidence in this truth is in any degree shaken. If Noah had not had full confidence in God's word, ever as the waves rose and the winds blew, and the hail and the rain poured down upon the roof of his ark, his heart would have sunk within him; but Noah knew, because God had said it, that all the waves of ocean and all the winds of heaven could not overturn that vessel, not because the vessel was so strong, or Noah so worthy, but because God was so faithful and his word so true.

When the destroying angel swept through the streets of Egypt, and when the poor Israelite in the house on whose lintels the blood was sprinkled, heard the rush of the angel's wing as he passed by, and the wild wail and lamentations that arose from his next neighbour's house over his slaughtered first-born, probably that Israelite trembled with terror and alarm. But it mattered not: he knew he was as safe as if all the attributes of God encompassed him round about: the angel dared not touch

him : his house was safe, not because its inhabitant was holy, but because the blood upon the threshold was for that house a full and perfect protection. So it is with us : our safety is not to be found by looking within, or by looking beneath ; but by looking above and leaning upon him who was made our sin that we might be made his righteousness. Hold fast justification by faith alone in the finished and perfect righteousness of Jesus as a vital, fundamental, and essential truth ; and then you will have in the possession of this truth one of the strongest antidotes to Romanism. If the priest comes to tell you you need his absolution, you can answer him, "I have perfect absolution in the blood of Jesus." If he tells you you must go and do good works in order to earn God's favour, tell him you "have a perfect righteousness in Emmanuel, and so a perfect title without works." If he tells you you have to propitiate God's anger, tell him that God already so loved you that he gave his own Son to die for you, and is reconciled to you, and you to him. This grand truth, just in proportion as it is felt, will pass like a ploughshare through all the superstitions of Rome. Already it startles pope, prelates, priests ; and it marks, by its accents, the day is nearer when the Gospel shall again be preached on the banks of the Tiber, and martyrs for Christ shall seal with their blood the truth to which they testified in the nineteenth century as they did eighteen centuries ago.

Another doctrine that you are to hold fast, is, Regeneration by the Holy Spirit of God. This doctrine is another great doctrine of Christianity ; justification by the righteousness of Christ was called by Luther the article of a standing or a falling Church : regeneration by the Holy Spirit may truly be called the article of a living or a dying Church. In order that there be a living Church, this doctrine must be proclaimed as a truth by the minister's lips, and it must be entertained as a reality in the people's hearts. In the present day it is the great doctrine that is now most in danger. It is assailed by many who assert that regeneration of the heart, or being born again, is merely a strong figure which we had better not make too much of. It is superseded by others who tell you that if you belong to the Church, you are sure to be regenerate ; or, if you are baptized, you must

have in and from baptism a new heart. It is misapprehended and explained away by others till it means nothing at all. But it remains true—at last as at the first. Hold fast, I implore you, this truth, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” It is the inculcation of this doctrine that lays the creature in the dust by enabling the creature to feel that he is dead; and reveals Christ upon his throne by showing that creature that God must do all, for the creature can do nothing. Justification is a change of state; regeneration is a change of character. Justification lifts you to a new land; regeneration, or rather the Spirit of God, by its means, enables you to breathe the air of that land. Justification gives you a title to new blessings; but regeneration makes you fit to enjoy those blessings. By this change the polarity of man is reversed: the flesh, which was the positive pole, becomes negative; and the spirit, which was the negative pole, becomes now the positive; all things are inverted and become new. Hold fast, then, regeneration by the Holy Spirit of God as your fitness for heaven;—God’s book the depository of all theology—justification your title—regeneration your fitness,—hold them fast, for they are your life.

Hold fast another privilege, and that a precious one, obscured and darkened as it often is—your right and liberty and welcome to go to God in praise, in prayer, in communion with him, without any other being upon earth to come between you and him. Hold fast, I say, your right and privilege to go to God in Christ, and call him your Father, and hold communion with him, and walk with him as Enoch walked, and speak with him as Abraham spoke; and feel that no priest, nor pope, nor rite, nor ceremony has any right to come between you and your God. You do not want them to introduce you to God; you do not need them to be stepping-stones to help you to God: God is near to you; where there is a holy temple upon earth, a sanctified heart, there God himself is present in the midst of it.

Let me then entreat you to hold fast these great truths. Hold fast in Christ alone, atoning, expiatory power; in the Holy Spirit alone, regenerative and sanctifying virtue; in the Bible alone, a conclusive and infallible directory. The cross accessible to all;

the Spirit necessary to all; the Bible open to all. Allow no man to shroud the first—no man to disparage the second—no man to shut the third. “Hold fast till Christ comes.” This is your charge; this is your commission; this is the duty that devolves upon you. True, you will have much inconvenience; true, you will have to sacrifice much you love and like; true, you will have to run in the face of the opposition of some, and encounter the scorn of others. True, you will have to suffer; but you must have made up your minds for this. Who begins a warfare without first counting the cost? In this fallen world, how can we expect to do our duty and not pay the penalty? or, who expects that while the sun is as he is, there will be any human being without a shadow? Let us then hold fast; God will take care of us; we have simply to do his commission—to hold fast, to promote his glory, to do his behest—having our “eye single, and our whole body shall be full of light.”

Having mentioned these great and primary truths which we are to hold fast, let me notice, in the next place, how they are to be held fast. Hold fast these truths in your minds. And why do I say so? On this account: Christianity is a rational faith; it demands and appeals to your judgment. First satisfy your minds on clear and conclusive proofs, that the Bible is God’s word—that the atonement is a central truth—that regeneration by the Spirit is an essential article of faith; satisfy your minds that these are truths, and when you have done so, lay aside in the depths of your souls these precious truths; do not bring them into discussion every day; do not drag them forth from the recesses of your heart into the arena of struggle. Be satisfied on clear grounds that the Bible is true, and that these doctrines are in it; and when you have done so, lay them aside in some sequestered nook in your minds, as truths that are fixed and that you cannot admit to be re-discussed: and so square your faith and hope and life and conduct by them, as absolute truths. Contend, suffer, sacrifice, in order to express your faith; but do not always have disputes about the very foundation and essential elements of your faith. When you have clearly seen these truths, and are fully satisfied that they are truths, then lay them up as fixed and sealed convictions, too sacred to be touched, too secure to be under-

mined. You have no idea what security this will give you, when one comes and says, "How can the Bible be true when it contains such a sentiment?" You reply, "On grounds to me perfectly conclusive, I have determined that this book comes from God; and that fact I cannot consent to dispute with you again. I hold it fast, because upon conclusive evidence I have proved it to be the book of God."

And when you have it clearly fixed in your heads, the next, and a very important point, is, to have it riveted in your hearts also. First it enters the head; next, it must find a lodgment in the heart. You must expect that the mind will be enlightened before the heart is impressed; but if the mind is enlightened with the right sort of light, the high probability is, that the heart will be affected with the warm and genial influence of that light. You know that the heart has a mighty influence on the head; and that often a man's creed is not the result of reasoning, proofs, convictions, but of sympathy, affection, love; he takes it because he likes it, or wishes it to be true. There is a complete Christian only when the creed is first light, and then loved; and when this creed has become light in his head and love in his heart, then such light and love together constitutes Christian life. Hold fast these truths, first in your head, laying them aside as fixed, settled, firm convictions. Pray that you may clearly comprehend the truths of God, and then pray—pray earnestly, that you may cordially accept them, till their fibres are intertwined in your hearts, and so rooted there that they cannot be moved.

And lastly, let these truths break forth in your conduct. Whatever a man is deeply, earnestly, and truly convinced of, is sure to appear more or less luminously in his outward walk. You need not be anxious about the outward walk, till you first have the inner life. You may depend upon it that man who has life in his body will not need to apply to a master to know how to move his legs, or how to lift his hand. What is wanted is life, and the whole body will be quick with action. It is so with Christian character: we need not to be taught first how to walk, but first where to get life; and when there is Christian life in the heart, it is wonderful how vigorous, how consistent, the whole walk becomes. Be Christians, and then you will live like Christians; but till you are Christians, all you are besides is not life, but an apologetics for life.

Hold fast then these great truths in your head, in your heart, and in your life, for they are unspeakably precious — more precious than gold, yea than much fine gold. When we lie down on a death-bed, philosophy, science, literature, and poetry, all must leave us, as miserable comforters; and only one thing can come near to our hearts, as peace, and life, and perfect repose — the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

Hold fast these truths, in the next place, because they have many enemies ready to attack and injure them. We live in a cold, freezing world, which is constantly carrying off the vital warmth that is within us. We walk amidst enemies within, enemies without — enemies in our hearts, enemies in our homes: and it is therefore essential that we should hold fast these truths because we are in a hostile world, and amid hostile influences. And to enable you to do so, study God's word as your directory; draw near to God fervently and frequently for strength. Pray that he may give you a heart right with him, and you will find that that new heart will prompt you to act in accordance with his will. I believe that no sincere man thirsting after God and acting up to the light he has, is ever left of God without getting more light to lead him to the Lamb and to the knowledge and enjoyment of everlasting peace. And not only pray for it, but also watch, stand fast, quit you like men; "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments." Come to the sanctuary as to a spring in the valley of Baca to refresh you; come to the house of God for bread to nourish you, for new motives, new hopes, new strength. It is on the week-day that you are to show your Christianity; it is on the Sabbath that you are to obtain, by the blessing of God, the motives, the principles, the power, the grace that will enable you to do so. It is true that many come to the house of God who are not Christians, but it is equally true that no real Christian fails to come to the house of God.

Hold fast these truths till Christ come. No change of circumstances is to change your creed. You have nothing to do with circumstances but to shape them to your purpose. You will always find that a bad workman lays all the blame of his blunders to his bad tools: whereas, the truth is, that a good workman with bad tools will do great things; but a bad workman with the best tools will do little work. Often we find that when Christians err

—and they do sometimes fall short—they generally lay the blame on their circumstances. We have nothing to do with circumstances but to shape them to our purposes, and to turn them, by the grace of God, to the glory of his name. In matters non-essential, if you are in Rome, do as Rome does; if you are in Constantinople, do as the Turk does; if you are in London, do as the Englishman does: but “hold fast” in Rome, “hold fast” in Constantinople, “hold fast” in London, this essential, vital, precious Gospel; let the men of these cities cherish what they believe to be their duty, or love what is their preference; but wherever you are—under whatever circumstances you are—in whatever trials you are, “hold fast” these truths. Let the world come to you if it will, and you pray that it may do so; but do not you go to the world, do not give up, or let go your convictions in order to propitiate the world. And if we thus hold fast, when Christ comes he will give us a crown of glory; and not to us only, but also to all them that love his appearing.

“That no man take thy crown.” The word is not *διάδημα*, imperial, but *στέφανος*, the laurel crown, made of bay leaves or parsley, which was given to the Olympian wrestler who had gained the victory, or to a racer who had first reached the goal; and the meaning is, that this Church had the crown, if not around her brows—for this is her militant state—at least in the earnest, the foretaste, and the certainty of it; for it is faith that makes things that are not to be as though they were, and that makes things that are hoped for to be as things that are actually had: and this Church was therefore taught to believe that she was as sure of that crown, if she held fast, as if it were actually wreathed about her brow. Now, says our Lord, “Hold it fast,” that sin may not blast it by its poison—that Satan may not wither it by his touch—that no foe may be able to unwreath it, and to take it from thy brow. Hold fast your dignity as a king, your glory as a priest, your relationship as a son; “for now are we the sons of God.” Part not with your glorious investiture; part with your coat, and let him who takes it have thy cloak also, but part not with that hope of glory which the world cannot give, but which the world often watches to take away. “Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

LECTURE XXVI.

GLORIOUS PROMISES.

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.... Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."—REV. iii. 9, 10, 12, 13.

THERE are two classes that are here specified, the one, to all appearances, the fac-simile of the other; so that the outward eye cannot distinguish them—those who are Jews, *i. e.* Christians in deed, and those who are Christians in semblance only and in form. Both have the outward aspect—one only has the inward power of the Gospel. One *seems* to be a Christian, the other is a Christian. The one is a hypocrite, having the outward form, but destitute of the inward life; the other has the inward life developed in the outward form, and showing itself in "whatsoever things are pure, and just, and lovely, and of good report." The one is the fruit that grows and ripens to maturity; the other is the picture of it which remains as it is for ever: the one is the painted bird, which ceases to look like the goldfinch when the shower falls upon it; the other is the living bird, which grows in beauty and in plumage as it grows in years, and is the same in the sunshine and in the storm. The one is the Jew outwardly—"And he is not a Jew," the apostle tells us, "who is one outwardly;

but he is a Jew who is one inwardly," whose is the life as well as the power of real religion. This teaches us that there is a distinction between outward and true Christianity. It is possible to be baptized in the most canonical form, and like the Prince of Wales, to be sprinkled with water from the most consecrated of rivers, and yet like many not to be a Christian. It is possible to belong to the most venerated communion in Christendom—to be able to trace, or fancy that we are able to trace the succession of its ministers through apostolic times and ages and countries, and yet not to be a Christian. It is possible to be the severest dissenter or the highest Churchman, and in neither case to be "a Jew inwardly, whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Such seems to me to be the idea stated in this verse. "They that say they are Jews," or assume to be Christians, "and are not." At the same time, I may notice that some commentators think that the allusion is to the Jews nationally. If so, it holds equally true. I do not believe that there is such a thing in Christendom as a thorough Jew. They "say they are Jews;" and according to the flesh it is their lineage. According to prophecy it is their doom and destiny to be so: but no man can remain one day solemnly and seriously a Jew, without the next day taking the step that necessarily follows, and becoming a Christian. You never meet with an honest Jew, who does not in the end become an earnest Christian. Moses so directly leads to Jesus—the type so plainly points to the antitype—prophecy in the Old Testament points so plainly to performance in the New, that the Old and New Testaments, like the twin lips of an ancient oracle, utter but one voice, and that voice the olden, the beautiful, the glorious one, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." "Now," says our Lord to this Church, "those who are mere pretenders—those who say they are Jews and are not, shall be made to come and worship," not thy foot, but "before thy foot;" *i. e.*, those who have the form and appearance of Christianity only, will yet be made to see the excellency and the beauty of the reality; and bitterly, perhaps hopelessly, regret that they had it not. For what is implied in having the form of Christianity? certainly the under-lying impression that Christianity is a right thing—a beautiful thing—a valuable thing:

hypocrisy has been defined, "the homage that vice pays to virtue." Hypocrisy means "wearing a mask;" to assume the mask of a king in order to commend yourself to others, implies that you value the dignity and the honour of a king, and would have it if you could: so, to have the form of religion, implies your acquiescence in the value of that religion; and so far it is the homage that the natural man pays to the child of God. "Now," says our Lord, "the day comes when those who have only the form shall not only feel its emptiness, but shall, in the presence of those who have the reality, worship that God whose word they have despised, and the form only of whose worship they have put on for their own convenient purposes."

We have an illustration of this in the case of Joseph's brethren, who, when they saw that their father was dead, said, "Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil that we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and said, Behold, we be thy servants." They were thus made to come and worship before him, and to acknowledge that God whose commandments they had broken, and whose law they had disobeyed. And so it is predicted very beautifully in Isaiah concerning the Jews:—"Thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles, and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

"The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and they also that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of Holy One of Israel.

"Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, thou shalt be called an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations."—Such are passages illustrative of this prediction, that those who hated the people of God, or who assumed the form of their religion for their own expedient pur-

poses, shall be made to acknowledge the sin of which they had been guilty, and to admit the excellency and the wisdom of those who have the life as well as the form of real religion.

Then adds our blessed Lord, "Behold, I come quickly." If this was true eighteen centuries ago, it is surely more so now that eighteen centuries have rolled away. All the judgments that come are the harbingers of his approach. Those voices and cries that are sounding through the nations of Europe are indications of his advent. All things are preparing the way for him. The voice that sounds in every ear, and comes home to every heart with greater emphasis at the present day than ever is, "Behold, I come quickly;" and it is the Church that cries in dutiful and grateful response, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." It is very remarkable, that throughout the whole New Testament it is Christ's coming, not our death, to which we are taught to look. I think a Christian, when he rises to the highest point of dignity and enjoyment, should never think of death at all. We have nothing to do with it. It is the most humbling, the most degrading, the most horrible thing. It is that to which we are not to look forward. We are merely to believe this, that we shall have grace to walk along that valley and to cross that stream in order to meet him who will either take us to himself, or will come to us. Let us therefore anticipate, not death, but life: let us look upon it as the necessary suffering preparatory to the glorious enjoyment. It is the advent of the bridegroom which the bride is taught to anticipate: it is the coming of his Lord that a Christian should hope for; and as he longs for it, and looks and waits for it, he longs for that which shall be the joy of his heart, and not of his only, but also of many generations.

Then he adds, not only, "Behold, I come quickly;" but also, "Behold, I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, and try them that dwell on the earth;" implying that an hour of temptation was to come, and from that hour Christ would keep them that are his. We all have trials; some personal, some domestic, and all of us recently national trials. Here is the promise, "I will keep thee from it;" either in it that we shall not be scathed by it, or from it that we shall not be injured spiritually by it; and if smitten down by it,

that it shall only waft us to the presence of Him with whom there is "no more sickness, nor sorrow, nor crying." I believe intense trials will come—greater judgments are yet to reach us: every one should be preparing to meet them. The sailor when he sees in the sky the cloud that indicates the coming storm, makes all ready to ride it out; and they who have turned their attention to God's prophetic word must see that judgments are soon to overtake the earth, so many and so sore, that if it were possible the very elect should be overwhelmed by them. Let us judge of what we can stand, by what we have stood. We know the strength of the oak by the tempest it has been able to withstand: we estimate the value of the ship by the storms she has gallantly passed through. The pure gold parts with the oxide only in the crucible, the dross only is utterly consumed; the fire destroys only the tinsel: the wind carries from the floor only the chaff: the gold remains more beautiful in the first—the wheat is left behind more pure in the latter.

Christ then says, that he will keep us from this hour of temptation, whatever it may be. How will he keep us? "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able to bear." There is something interesting and comforting to a Christian in this thought, that when he suffers, he suffers not alone. Those tears that the world would laugh at, Christ sympathises with. Those pains and losses which the world will disregard, Christ sympathises with and succours us under. When Peter was about to be tried, our Lord told him, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." What comfort is there in this fact! Satan never desires to sift the chaff. It is not worth his while: it is always the wheat that he sifts and tries to destroy: and therefore that man who is most tempted by Satan, persecuted by the world, tried by affliction, has far the greatest presumptive evidence that he belongs to the wheat that may be sifted, and not to the chaff that shall be consumed with unquenchable fire. And let us know, that before Satan has begun to sift, Jesus has begun to pray. "*Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you; but I have prayed for you,*" not "*I will pray for you.*" The prayer of the High Priest precedes the ordeal of

his suffering people. We are placed in the furnace : but the great Mediator has presented us before the throne and pledged himself to our safety and deliverance. "Satan hath *desired* to have you, that he may sift you as wheat : " whether he shall have you or not does not depend upon his malignity or might or power, but upon the permissive providence of God, who sees what is needed, and who will permit or withhold the trial according as he sees best for us. If there be a needs be, then let the trial come, for it will be sanctified to us : if there be no needs be, then trial will not come, because it is not wanted. Your trials, believers, will not be too many, too heavy, too long, as the devil would like to make them ; and they will not be too light, too short, too few, as poor flesh and blood could wish to make them ; but they will be meted out by the hand that was nailed to the cross, superintended by Almighty power, guided by unfailing wisdom, and animated and inspired by that love which has loved us from the first, and will love us to the last. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not : " "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, that shall come upon all the world."

Some commentators think that the hour of temptation thus alluded to, is the ten years of almost unprecedented persecution to which the Christians were subjected under the reign of Trajan ; and that the promise here given, whilst it has the generic reference which I have endeavored to explain, has also a prior specific reference to the Church of Philadelphia, to which it is addressed in the first instance, and thus the promise of our Lord primarily is, that he will keep the Church of Philadelphia unscathed, its ministers unmartyred, its people undestroyed, in the midst of those ten years of fiery persecution, which were to fall upon the whole *οἰκουμένη*—the inhabited world, or Roman empire. This promise was literally and verbatim fulfilled. Philadelphia was the only Church in the seven which escaped unscathed from the persecutions of Trajan ; and the reason which philosophers assigned and historians have stated is, that Philadelphia was subject to earthquakes ; and the Roman emperor, with all his sanguinary cruelty, was afraid to go there himself, or to trust his generals and his armies in a place so dangerous. No doubt this was the secondary cause, which so many modern philosophers worship ;

but the true secret of Philadelphia's safety was the first great and glorious cause that Christians trust in—that Jesus had recorded it as his truth, "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, that shall come upon all the world." "I may do it by terrifying Cæsar by the earthquakes to which you are subjected; I may do it by a hundred secondary causes; but all these are but instruments, and it is my hand that wields them. They are dead, and ineffective, and useless, till they hear my voice and feel my touch.

The great and chief Bishop of all the Churches then adds the beautiful promise, "Him that overcometh"—him that is kept from the hour of trial—who thus holds fast the strength that he has—who thus keeps the crown that his Lord has given him; "him will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him my new name, and the name of the city of my God." What is meant by this promise, "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God?" Is there then a temple among the blessed? Is it not said of the millennial state, "I saw no temple therein?" Then how can this promise be ever realized in the believer's experience, "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God." There is no temple in the coming kingdom, in the sense of a material temple: no spot will be more consecrated than another; all places will be equally holy, all hours canonical; all voices shall be praise; all hearts shall be love. The tabernacle was a moveable temple; Solomon's was a temporarily fixed temple; the apocalyptic temple a more glorious fixture still, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof. Our Lord therefore says, "I will make him a pillar," not in a material temple which is doomed to change or decay, but in that living temple, composed of living stones, the light and the glory of which are God and the Lamb. We read in the New Testament that James, Cephas, and John "seemed to be pillars." We read again, in the Epistle to Timothy, "the Church of God which is the ground and pillar of the faith." The word "pillar," both in the Hebrew and Greek languages, seems to be the root word of the greatest power and dignity. For instance, the Hebrew word "*adonai*," which we translate "Lord," or "master," is derived from the word "*adon*,"

which means a "pillar;" and the word βασιλεὺς, the Greek word for a "king," is derived from βάσις, a "foundation," or "pillar," and λαὸς, "the people." And when Christ says, "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God," it means, "I will raise him to dignity and honour." Pillars were used as supports in a temple or a palace, and they were also used as monuments on which were written inscriptions commemorative of great events or illustrious worth; and in ancient temples pillars were often erected as votive offerings, and bore the names of the offerer—with his titles, his family, his country, and the deeds by which he was distinguished, and the mercies for which he was thankful, inscribed upon it. Now, says our Lord, "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God: and I will write upon him my new name:" he shall be a monument of my praise; and all men that behold him raised in that glorious temple shall read there the grace that selected him, and see the glory that crowned him, and shall raise as they behold it a yet nobler and more earnest song, "unto him that loved him and washed him from his sins in His own blood, and made him a king and a priest unto God." The pillars that support the earth shall be dissolved; the gates of Thebes, the pyramids of Egypt, the columns of the Parthenon, shall all moulder and decay; but those pillars that Christ is building and erecting through successive years to be the corridors of the temple of our God, shall borrow immortality from decay, splendour from surrounding darkness; and when centuries of millennia have rolled their career, they shall only shine more beautifully in the lustre and the light of that grace which placed them there—monuments and pillars in the temple of our God.

"And thence," our Lord adds, "he shall no more go out." This is an allusion to the Jewish custom of the priests and Levites succeeding each other in courses. One course of priests ministered by day, and another course ministered by night. But in this temple, he says, "Ye shall no more go out;" or, as it is explained in another chapter of the Apocalypse, "They shall serve him day and night in his temple." They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, and he that sitteth on the throne shall lead them." And again, "They rest not day nor night saying, Glory, and honour, and blessing unto the Lamb, and unto him

that sitteth upon the throne." This promise therefore implies, that in the coming kingdom we shall never be weary of the service of God. No sickness shall prostrate us — no labour render us conscious of fatigue; no lapse of time shall create the least sensation of weariness; our anthems shall never cease; our joys shall be unclouded; our worship shall be unsuspended for ever and ever. Adam and Eve, placed amid the glories of paradise, had to go out weeping exiles to water a desert world by their tears. But from that second and more glorious paradise, retrieved from the wreck of sin and redeemed from the hands of Satan, we shall no more go out, but shall serve the Lord in his temple day and night without ceasing, and he shall dwell among us and lead us to green pastures and to living waters, and wipe away all tears from our eyes.

Then our Lord adds, as another beautiful feature of this promise, "I will write upon him the name of my God." The sculptor will engrave his name upon the statue; the architect will write his name upon the building; to signify that they are his property, and that they stand not to praise themselves, but to celebrate the glory of the architect who raised them and keeps them there. If you desire to know what that name is which shall be written upon those pillars, and which shall shine with imperishable lustre, you may read it in the Book of Exodus, where God passed before Moses and proclaimed "the name of the Lord," the name that shall be written on those pillars: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation." The revelation of this name will be the most glorious vision of the millennium; the glorifying of this name will be the most delightful service of the saved; the study of this name in the light of glory shall be the joy and privilege of the redeemed.

And "I will write upon him," also he says, "the name of the city of my God." Abraham looked for "a city whose builder and maker is God." "God," it is said, "hath prepared for them a city." There are two great cities spoken of in the Apocalypse;

the name of the one is Babylon — “the mystery of iniquity, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth;” and that is the name written upon the forehead of him that belongs to it: but the other city is “the heavenly Jerusalem;” and I need not repeat that the meaning of the word “Jerusalem” is “Vision of Peace.” When Christ therefore says, “I will write upon him the name of the city of my God,” it is as if he said, “I will write upon him the name of the heavenly Jerusalem — the vision of everlasting peace; I will make it his everlasting home—his happy reward — his eternal joy, where the citizens shall feel no more sadness, suffer no more sickness, and be acquainted with no more death.”

And “I will” also, says he, “write upon him my new name.” What is Christ’s new name? You must have noticed, in reading the Apocalypse, that as long as the Church is in the suffering state, Christ’s name is always the Lamb. Wherever we read of the Church under persecution, we find Christ represented as the Lamb: but when we come to the close of the Revelation, and read of his appearance a second time in glory, when the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, we then discover him clothed with a white robe, and on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” Now when Christ says, “I will write upon the believer my new name,” it means, “I will write upon him that name which indicates universal victory; which proclaims the world restored and retrieved from ruin; which declares that the number of my people is gathered to their home, and that all the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ.” This is the new name that the Lord will write upon him. Those names in which we gloried on earth shall drop away as worthless. Those sounds which have electrified the world shall then be hushed. We have written upon our churches the names of Luther, and Calvin, and Cranmer; but a day comes when the last echoes of those names shall be spent, and it shall be seen at once that we belong to none but Christ. Could those saints look down from glory and behold their names inscribed where they are, they would lament that inscriptions so unworthy should be suffered, either in our hearts or in our worship, to

darken in the least degree by their shadow that name which is above every name, which was pronounced in scorn at Antioch, but shall sound as the sweetest note in the eternal jubilee, when Christ and Christianity shall be all and in all. It will there and then be found that Christ begins and also completes our salvation. He is the author and the finisher of our faith—he is all and in all.

Such is the address and promise made to the Philadelphian Church : let us draw from it these two lessons. First, there are such things as rewards promised to the Christian. God does not mutilate man when he deals with him in the gospel ; he provides for every power its appropriate stimulus, and therefore we are inspired and directed upon earth by the prospect of a future reward. He lays hold of this peculiarity of our nature, which anticipates the future, and holds forth to it the prospect of a glorious reward when time shall be no more. His grace makes the promise of the reward ; his grace bestows it : and it is his grace that helps us to hope for it, and qualifies us for the enjoyment of it. So Abraham “looked for a city that had foundations.” Moses, we are told, “had respect unto the recompense of the reward ;” and we too may expect a reward. We are saved by grace alone ; but there shall be realized in the future, degrees of glory, proportioned to the progress we have made in grace below. As there are some amid the realms of the lost, who shall be beaten with many stripes, and others who shall be beaten with few stripes ; so those who are in the realms of the blessed shall shine like the stars for ever and ever, with varying lustre, one star differing from another star in glory ; or, to change the metaphor, each vessel full, but each vessel differing in capacity from another, according to what it was made in the world below.

We may notice, that such a hope of such a reward, is the only way to extinguish all inferior hopes and expectation of reward below. No man lives without an object of hope, just as no man lives without an object of trust. There is no one in this congregation who has not some hope in the distance on which his heart is set ; just as there is no man here present who is not either trusting in an idol, or in the true and living God. God treats us as men ; and his process is, to dislodge the expectation of the

earthly reward that hangs in the distant horizon, by filling its place with a glorious and heavenly one, infinitely more worthy of our ambition. He removes the idol which deceives him that leans upon it like a broken crutch, and substitutes for it the Rock of ages—the Lord Jesus Christ. We are here taught how to deal with man. The way to displace an inferior hope, is by bringing to bear upon it a superior one. No man's heart will submit to be deprived of what it has, until you can show that heart something better and brighter to take its place. It is of no use preaching to a man not to love money, (because he must have something to love,) unless you teach him to substitute for it the unsearchable riches of Christ, possessed of a far greater glory, and exerting a far more attractive influence. We would not deprive you of the idol you adore without instantly bringing before you that God who alone is worthy of your homage and your love. Christianity preaches not the extinction of the light you have, but only the exchange of that little light for a brighter and a more glorious one. We would dislodge the idol by the living God—the love of sin by the love of holiness—the pursuit of riches that perish in the using, by the pursuit of the unsearchable riches of Christ. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear the joyful sound of a free and full salvation; he that hath an eye to see, let him look unto Jesus and live; he that has a memory to recollect, let him recollect these glorious precepts—these noble encouragements; he that has a heart to feel, that heart was made to love the Saviour; he that has a mind to investigate, that mind was made to know and to study the Saviour; he that hath a soul to be saved, let him seek and rush without delay to be saved by a Saviour's blood; for unto men of every age, country, clime, and language, the words are this night addressed—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

PHILADELPHIA is thus described by recent travellers.—A city of Asia Minor, one of the seven Apocalyptic Churches, is supposed to have derived its name from the brothers Attalus Philadelphus, and Eumenes, who founded it. It is situated about thirty-five miles east by south from Sardis, and stands in the plain

of Hormus, about midway between the river of that name and the termination of Mount Tmlous. Not long before the date of the Apocalyptic Epistle in Rev. iii. 7, 13, this city had suffered so much from earthquakes, that it had been in a great measure deserted by its inhabitants; which may, in some degree, account for the poverty of this Church, as described in this epistle. Strabo says, "Philadelphia has no walls that are safe," (alluding to earthquakes.) The inhabitants resided mostly in the country, and possessed fertile lands. The Church of Philadelphia is commended for its faithfulness, and has made to it a gracious promise of Divine protection, which has been signally fulfilled, as we learn even from infidel testimony.

Gibbon says, "Philadelphia appears to have resisted the attacks of the Turks in 1312, with more success than the other cities. At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperor, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant citizens defended their religion and freedom about fourscore years, and at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans, (Bajazet,) 1390. Among the Greek colonies and Churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect — a column in a scene of ruins!" Whatever may be lost of the spirit of Christianity, there is still the form of a Christian Church in this city, which is highly revered by the Mohammedans, and called by them Allah Shehr, or the City of God, and is a considerable town spreading over the slopes of three or four hills. It contains about 1,000 Christians, chiefly Greeks, most of whom speak only the Turkish language.

The American missionaries, Fisk and Parsons, when they visited the place in 1820, were informed by the Greek Archbishop Gabriel, that there were five churches in the town, besides twenty which were either old or small, and not then in use. He estimated the whole number of houses at 3,000, of which 250 were inhabited by Greeks, the rest by Turks. They counted six minarets; and one of the present mosques was pointed out to them as the church in which assembled the primitive Christians of Philadelphia, to whom St. John wrote. The remains of heathen antiquity are not numerous.

Mr. Arundell concurs with other travellers, in describing the

streets as filthy, and the houses remarkably mean; but he was much impressed by the beauty of the country as seen from the hills, and observes that "the view from these elevated situations is magnificent in the extreme; gardens and vineyards lie at the back of the town; and before it is one of the most extensive and richest plains in Asia."

There are no considerable ruins. One of the most remarkable is a single column of great antiquity, which has evidently appertained to another structure than the present church.

LECTURE XXVII.*

POWER OVER THE NATIONS, AND THE MORNING STAR.

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers : even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”—REV. ii. 26—29.

I FEEL the difficulty of expounding the words which I have read as more especially the subject of our meditation this evening. I have consulted various commentators—I have studied the grounds of their solutions ; but few of them appear to me satisfactory. I will therefore endeavour to explain these words less by striking out any conjectural solution of my own, and more by parallel references to other parts of the word of God ; which, after all, is the true way of discovering the mind of the Spirit.

“He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers : even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star.” I explained in my remarks on the previous epistles what is meant by the expression, “he that overcometh.” It describes the character of the Church militant, on earth, “conquering ;” hereafter it will be the Church triumphant, or conquest. Now is the battle of life ; our enemies are “principalities and powers ;” our weapons are spiritual—faith and hope

* It will be seen that this Lecture appears out of its place. It was omitted by the Reporter in his notes, and overlooked by the Preacher in preparing for the press. It is hoped that the reader will pardon an error in arrangement, and accept the Lecture as not unworthy of a place among the rest.

and truth. Victory is certain. It is not true in earthly combats that every soldier who fights shall win the laurels, or share in the victory : but it is true in the great battle of life, that every one who engages in it in the right name, and wields the right weapons, shall not fail to wear the laurels, enjoy the victory, and "eat of that hidden manna," and receive that "crown of glory which fadeth not away."

"He that overcometh," then, I have already explained, to you. The next distinction here given of the member of the true Church is, that "he keepeth Christ's works." These are not his miraculous works; those we cannot keep; though we know that some who have wrought miracles will appear before Christ, and say, "Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" and he shall profess unto them, "I never knew you." It is not, therefore, he who can work miracles, if such there be, who keeps Christ's works, overcomes, and inherits the kingdom prepared for the people of God; but it is he who keeps those works, so that he brings forth the fruits mentioned by the Apostle, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." They are those who are described as the "meek;" as "they that mourn;" as "they that hunger and thirst after righteousness;" as the "merciful;" the "poor in heart;" the "peace-makers;" the "persecuted for righteousness' sake;" they are those, in short, who, having received the seed on good ground, when they have heard the word keep it, and bring forth fruit abundantly. They are the "just who live by faith," and who "draw not back to perdition." The crown is here mentioned as the reward of persistency in the truth, and in the practical exemplification of it, and not of a momentary acceptance, followed, as it not unfrequently is, by the speedy and total abandonment of it. It is they that persevere in the course which they have begun, who are ultimately crowned. Many commence with burning zeal, but end in freezing coldness. They start with the splendour of a rocket, and they go out with its evanescence too. Their morning is full of promise; but ere their sun has reached its meridian, it is clouded and darkened and obscured. The promise is to him whose progress is like that of the sun that "shineth more and

more unto the perfect day." By the persistency of your career you may judge of the strength of the momentum under which you have begun. A human impulse will soon exhaust itself; a divine one will not die till the subject of it is beyond the possibility of change. They, then, that "keep my works," are they who shall be crowned; they who keep them in their hearts—in their words—in their lives—in affliction—in persecution—"in all time of their wealth and prosperity, in all time of their tribulation, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment,—these are they that overcome, and to whom is given "the bright and morning star."

But the special promise here made to "him that overcometh" is, "I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." Perhaps the best way to explain the reference here is, to revert to the special error alluded to in the former part of the epistle. That spiritual error is "the teaching of that woman Jezebel," who, as I explained to you, is the great type and personation of the corrupt modern apostasy, whose errors this Church was reprov'd for not repudiating. Now if this refers to the great modern apostasy, then the "power over the nations," which is the promise made to the people of God, corresponds in name and extent, but contrasts in kind, to the power which that apostasy has exercised over all the nations of the earth. We read that the power exercised by that apostasy has been "making drunk" all nations by her idolatry, her sorceries, her persecutions, and her crimes; the whole world has wondered after her; nations have been subject to her; kings have trembled at her summons, and the brightest realms have been darkened by the shadow of a priest's curse. Then, says the Redeemer, "I will give to my people power over the nations," as the inheritance of my true Church, in contrast to the tyrannic power which is the usurpation of the popedom! It will be Christian, spiritual, real power; not physical, oppressive, tyrannical power. "I will give him power over the nations" by wielding weapons that are holy, and by the exercise of a sceptre that is pure, permanent, divine.

What is the great axiom of modern philosophy? "Knowledge is power." Wherever there is knowledge, there is wielded an element of mighty power. What is the electric telegraph? Evidence that a truth in science is power. What is the railway? A proof that knowledge is power. What are all these but developments of a principle first discovered as a great truth in science, and then matured and developed into practical use, and so they are clear proofs that "knowledge is power." Christian knowledge rises to a yet higher sovereignty—it is not only power, but it is peace and happiness too; and it is a very interesting fact brought out with consummate beauty and eloquence by Mr. Trench, in the Hulsean Lectures, called "Christ the Desire of all Nations," that just in proportion as nations have grown in Christian knowledge, and in likeness to Christ, in the same proportion have they grown in superiority over surrounding lands, in victory over all opposing forces—and in legitimate, beneficent, permanent power over all the nations of the earth. The land whose queen reigns "by the grace of God" is the land that rules the waves: the land that is most distinguished for the purity, the spread, and the depth of its Christianity, is that on whose dominions the sun never sets; and the country that is most illuminated by the Gospel of Jesus, has reached a height of national grandeur unparalleled in the present, and unrivalled in the past; and it has already been fulfilled in the history of the nations of Christendom, that just in the ratio in which true Christianity in all its purity spreads amid its people, does national greatness and social and popular prosperity increase. The truest patriots and those who do most for their country's good, are not those who plead most eloquently in the senate, or who make the most effective speeches on the platform or the hustings; but such unnoticed subterranean labourers, as the missionaries and agents of the London City Mission and Scripture Readers' Society. These men, penetrating into those courts which the shadow of the policeman alone has heretofore darkened—entering those lanes and alleys to which the light of the sun and the light of Christianity are almost equally strangers—and visiting those districts of our great cities, unvisited by the pastor, because from their number and their mass incapable of being so,—are nipping the germs of rebellion

at their commencement, teaching the poor that the rich do care for them, and that even if no fellow-man does care for them, they may find sympathy in the bosom of their Lord, and peace and hope beyond the stars, which man can neither give nor take away.

This promise, then, of "power over the nations of the earth," so far clearly teaches us that the most Christian nation is the most prosperous. We may predict that our flag shall still wave victorious on the seas, and our ships shall drop their anchors upon the shores of every country upon earth, just as long as in our country we acknowledge in our feelings, our sympathies, our lives, our social acts, our laws, "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is the ruin of any people." Still I admit that the main fulfilment of this promise is yet future; and that it is so is distinctly proved by reference to passages in which we find the same language used to indicate the same fact. Thus, in chap. xix., 12, 15, 16, we read, "His eyes were as a flame of fire; and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." And so in chap. xx. 4: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them."

There is certainly indicated in the Bible some sense in which the people of God shall join in the last assize, and sit in judgment on the nations of the earth. In Dan. vii. 18, is an indication of the same truth; "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever." And again, in ver. 27: "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all nations shall serve and obey him." We have the same great truth intimated in language almost the same as that of the passage on which I am now commenting, in Psalm ii., which is a prophecy of the triumph of Christ, where the Father, speaking to the Son, says, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost

parts of the earth for thy possession. And thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron ; and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel." This refers to an age when the heathen shall be Christ's inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth shall be his possession. So again, the Apostle speaks of "the day of perdition of ungodly men ;" which would seem to be the same day as that in which Christ shall with a rod of iron break in pieces the nations of the earth ; and they who are Christ's people shall, in some manner which I cannot explain, join with Christ in the judgment and the doom pronounced upon the unbelieving nations of the earth.

But perhaps we shall collect more light upon this subject if we refer to that part of the promise which is contained in ver. 28 of my text, namely, "I will give unto him that overcometh, the morning star." We find that when this expression is employed towards the other Churches of Asia, it is associated in some manner with David, and with Christ the offspring of David. Thus, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." There can be no question that Christ is that star : neither can there be any question that in some sense the star is the symbol of Christ in Christ's character as the antitype of David. Solomon was the type of Christ as the "Prince of Peace." David is always spoken of as the type of Christ, as the conqueror of all enemies, the destroyer of all opposition. We find, too, the expression, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David," who opens the seals and makes known the mysteries of the book. The first promise which unfolds to us something of the meaning of this epithet, "the Morning Star," is in Numb. xxiv, where we hear Balaam uttering a prophecy in these words : "Behold, there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall arise out of Israel : " there is "the morning star." And then mark what it is associated with ; it is associated with Christ in his capacity of conquering the nations, and destroying all opposition ; for the seer proceeds : "And a Sceptre shall arise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies ; and Israel shall do valiantly." You will recollect too,

that when the wise men came to Bethlehem, and stated, "We have seen his star in the east," what the effect of that fact, and of the star which symbolized the advent of Christ, was upon Herod: he was filled with consternation, believing that the appearance of the star indicated the advent of a king, and that that king was come to defeat his armies, depose him from his throne, and introduce a new and more glorious dynasty. So that in every passage where this star is spoken of as the symbol of Christ, we have it associated with conquest, victory, and the destruction of all opposition. If so, we may then conclude that this passage on which I am now commenting, is mainly a description of Christ as the victorious king—as the antitype of David—who shall "rule all nations with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces as a potter's vessel."

The next fact we see in this promise is, that the morning star, and the destruction of all the enemies of Christ, is associated with the day of the first resurrection—the resurrection that precedes the millennial glory, and ushers in the final and permanent triumph of Christ, and them that are his. May we all have the *φωσφόρος*, the morning or day-star in our hearts until the millennial day dawn, when there shall be no more need of the sun nor of the moon, but the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb shall be the light thereof. That there is in these words a reference to the first resurrection will be evident by looking at the following passages; first in Psalm xlix.—"Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them *in the morning*." So again, in Psalm cx. there is another prophecy equally expressive: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness *from the womb of the morning*: thou hast the dew of thy youth." What is the signification of this? That as the dew sparkles in the beams of the rising sun, so shall the earth, after the trumpet shall sound, be covered with saints in their resurrection glory, beautiful and countless as the dew-drops upon the blades of grass, or upon the rose-leaf, when the morning sun begins to shine on them.

In Psalm xli. we find an allusion to the same subject; "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help

her, and that *right early*," as it stands in our translation; but in the original it is literally translated, "God shall help her *when the morning appears*;" i. e. when the morning star shall shine; and, you may perceive that this is a Psalm of battle and victory; for it is when this glorious morning has dawned—when Christ has destroyed all his enemies—when his own people shall sit with him in the last assize, sympathising with him, and rejoicing with him in his victories, that they shall say to each other, "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth." "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." Again, in Isaiah xxvi. 19, we have these words: "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust;" (these are the pious dead, when they hear the trumpet of the first resurrection;) "for thy dew," i. e. "in the morning," for it is then that the dew appears—"for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

At that day when these judgments take place, and when God's people shall appear in resurrection, splendour, and magnificence, the voice of the Son of man shall rouse the sleeping dead, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then these risen and glorified ones shall beautify the earth over all its surface as the dew-drops beautify the grass when the morning sun begins to shine forth. They who are thus raised shall join with Christ, seated on his throne, when the millennial day shall close, and with him acquiesce in the condemnation of the guilty, and with him rejoice in the salvation of the saved. At that day all our sympathies shall be merged in one; all our affections shall be lost in one; we shall mourn over none that are missing; we shall not fail to rejoice over every one that is saved and numbered among the followers of the Lamb. Our mind shall be so completely Christ's mind—our sympathies shall be so completely the repercussions or the echoes of his, that what he does, we shall rejoice to see; and to what he pronounces, we shall rejoice to add, Amen; and he shall be all and in all. Thus feeling so completely as he feels, according to his own promise, we shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

This, then, appears to me to be the meaning of a passage of

Scripture, confessedly difficult, and yet so completely in harmony with other portions of the word of God, that I cannot explain it away by supposing that all its spiritual meaning is exhausted in the present dispensation : I must regard it as mainly a prophetic fact to be fulfilled, embodied, and illustrated in the dispensation to come.

I now close my remarks upon another address to another of the Seven Churches of Asia. You must have noticed that all the promises which have been given are promises of Christ himself. Are you placed in deep despondency? Christ will give you "the white stone" of cordial acceptance before him. Are you placed amid famine—spiritual famine, the most terrible of all? He will feed you with "hidden manna." Are you plunged in the shades of the darkest night? He tells you that he will give you "the morning star." And what a blessed epoch will that be which is here predicted! Why should we fear its advent? How should we long for that hour when we shall "see the King in his beauty"—when Job's beautiful prediction shall become performance, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another!" How should we long for that day when this shall be fulfilled, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is!" How should we pant for that blessed day when we shall no more "see through a glass darkly," but "face to face!"

This promise is given to the conqueror—to him that keeps Christ's word. Yet it is not said, "I will give as a reward," or "I will bestow as a purchase;" but grace sounds as clearly in the promise, as it does in the doctrines and privileges of Christianity, "I will *give* him the bright and the morning star." We need not climb alp upon alp to reach it; we need not wings to enable us to fly to it: ask, and you shall obtain all that you seek. God's word is the telescope; Christ is the star; and he that looks the longest shall see the most clearly and rejoice most heartily, till that day comes which is the eloquence of a thousand prophecies, the burden of a thousand songs.

Such is the promise to the Church of Thyatira. Let me ask

you now, my dear friends, are you among the people of the Lord? is the morning star your trust, your hope, your glory? Are you Christians? Are you born again? Are you justified? Were the heavens to rend—were the earth to quake—and were the peal of the last trump to reverberate through the graves of the dead, and the homes of the living; or were you called upon this night to lay aside this old tabernacle, and to appear at that judgment-seat whose sentence cannot be reversed, and from whose doom there can be no appeal—are you ready? What would be your position there and then? Could we say, “Blessed Lord, thou art my hope, thou art my shield, thou art my righteousness, my Lord, my all! If thou wert to deal with me after my deserts, I could look for nothing less than everlasting banishment from thee. If thou shouldest deal with me as thou hast promised, thy righteousness shall be my title, thy blood my sacrifice. Then, blessed Lord, I know that thou who art my judge, art also my friend, and in the New Jerusalem, and on the judgment-seat, I shall alike see thee.” Why should this great subject be left in doubt a single moment? Why should we leave this question unresolved, unsettled,—whether we are going to everlasting perdition or to everlasting happiness? If there were a neutral place, you might so leave it: if there were some intermediate isthmus, neither wasted by the streams of time nor washed by the waves of eternity, on which you could stand and treat the past with indifference and the future with contempt, then you might now care nothing about these things. But if it be true that every man in this assembly must live for ever amid the effulgence of eternal joy, or pine for ever in the miseries of an eternal hell, is it common sense to leave such a question untried—such a destiny unsettled? My dear friends, be decided. The man who can go home this night, and in the silence and secrecy of his closet can thus speak to Christ: “My Lord, my Saviour, my sins are a load that might and must sink me to the depths of hell, but thou hast died for the chiefest of sinners, and for me who flee to thee; this night it is my prayer that thy blood may wash me—that thy righteousness may cover me, and thy Spirit sanctify me: and I know that if I so trust I shall never be confounded;”—the man who can say so from the depths of his heart has begun the

new course, is justified by faith, and will have peace with God through Jesus Christ—to whom be all the glory both now and for ever. Amen.

“Life is real—life is earnest,
And the grave is not its goal :
‘Dust thou art, to dust returnest,’
Was not spoken of the soul.

“Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end and way ;
But to act that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

“Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate ;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.”

LECTURE XXVIII.

ENTHUSIASM.

“And unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”—REV. iii. 14—16.

THIS Church is the last and least praised of the seven; to it special rebukes are addressed, one of which is couched in the words which I have now read. Our blessed Lord introduces himself under one of those august characteristics by which he is described in the opening part of the book: he declares himself to be “the Amen,” *i. e.* the commencement and the close of creation, providence, redemption, to whose glories creation, providence, redemption shall all contribute. The “Amen” is the truth and the substance of every promise—the performance and the burden of every prophecy,—in whom revelation is seen complete, and creation shall be seen restored—in whom man shall receive his greatest happiness and God his everlasting glory. He is not only the “Amen,” but he is also “the Witness.” This epithet is applied to Christ by God through the lips, or rather the pen, of the prophet Isaiah; “I have given him for a witness to the people:” as a witness he has a testimony. To what does Christ witness? The testimony of a witness is the chief ground on which the decision of a judge is based and the information of men is obtained. The testimony therefore of such a witness as Christ must be to us of unspeakable value. On it our duties and privileges and hopes of everlasting happiness and glory do and must depend. He is a witness to what man is by nature. He

knows what is in man; what his history, his deterioration, and his true relation are. It is the testimony of this witness who cannot lie, that man by nature is "without God and without hope in the world;" "desperately"—that is, by human power incurably—"depraved;" "dead in trespasses and sins." He is the witness too of what God is by grace. "God is love;" God is "our Father." Again, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son he hath declared him." And he is also a witness to the method by which God can be glorified in the salvation of sinners such as we are. He has set forth a great proposition which all the wise men of the east and philosophers of the west failed to discover or demonstrate,—how God can remain holy, just, and true, and yet let forth the expression of his mercy, the seal of forgiveness, the manifestation of his love in the forgiveness of those who have been born in apostasy from him, and lived in hourly rebellion against him. Blessed and glorious truth, that God may justify me and yet be just! nay more, that when God bows the heaven to blot out the sins of the greatest sinner, he covers himself with richer glory than when he stood upon the circuit of the skies and said, "Let there be light," and there was light. His judicial acquittal of sinners gives him greater glory than his creative birth of worlds. God received glory when he created the universe, and the morning stars sang his praise beside it; God receives glory when he sustains, maintains, and corrects it: but he never seemed to angels and to the intelligent universe more glorious than when he stooped to the manger and hung upon the cross, and amid the proofs of the sufferer emitted evidence of the present God as he whispered to the dying criminal the blessed accents, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

My dear hearers, in pleading with God—and I wish all to perceive and feel the full force of this—we may say to him, "O Lord, be merciful to forgive me!" This is a great deal; but we may go further; we may say, "O God, manifest thy justice, thy faithfulness, thy truth in forgiving me." This is much—but further, we may say to God, "Glorify thy name in the forgiveness of my transgressions." If we are not forgiven men, it is not because God's love has become cold, or his ear has become heavy, or his mercy has been exhausted; but because we do not with

child-like simplicity believe him, thinking these news too good to be true, or our case too desperate to be cured, so that we may not therefore venture to look and live. It may be that others think the world is our proper prize, and that it alone we are to seek after, or that we may hear and speak and think of these things at another and a more convenient season; but very generally, a latent suspicion or doubt of the reality of these things is our besetting state. He is a witness also to the responsibilities of man; to the glories of the saved—to all the miseries of the lost; he is a witness to what man is capable of by grace, and what man may be destined to by transgression. He is a witness who speaks not from hearsay, or from second hand. He has come down from the glory that is inaccessible and full of light, and spoken with the tones of authority that which he has seen and known to be the very fact and truth of God.

He is introduced, in the second place, as the “beginning of the creation of God.” Perhaps this word might be translated “prince.” *Ἀρχή* is a Greek word that means frequently “a beginning;” occasionally, “a prince,” or “chief;” or, it may be used in the same way as the Latin words, “*origo mundi*,” which mean, not “the *origin* of the world;” but “he that originated the world;” the beginner of the world. We are therefore to understand by “the beginning of the creation of God,” not that Christ was the first being who was created, for this is not the meaning of the words, but that he is the Creator of all things that are and have been created. If this be so, then it reveals what science has clearly demonstrated, that matter is not eternal—that the world had a beginning.

It may appear to some of you who have common sense, that to speak of this world, so liable to wear and tear, and waste and decay, as having had no beginning, but existing from everlasting ages, is to speak of an effect without supposing there can be a cause; in other words, to speak absurdity: yet such absurdity has been gravely maintained. It is, then, a very interesting fact that science, from more provinces than one,—geology, astronomy, geography,—declares with one voice that there is unequivocal evidence in the heavens above, indisputable proof in the earth beneath, that this globe on which we stand had a beginning; and

that that beginning is not a very ancient, but a very recent one. It is thus that science steps forward, not to aid religion, but to add fresh evidence to the skeptic mind, of the truth of religion,—that God spoke truth, and that the Bible embodies that truth, “All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.” Let us look at the sky above, or at the earth below—let us study the ant in its nest, or the angel beside the throne—let us look at the dew-drop that dances on the rose-leaf, or at the sea that girdles the earth as with a broad and glorious zone—let us look at fruit, and flower, and pebble, and gem, and star; and if we look rightly and honestly, we shall see such proofs of wisdom, beneficence, power, design, that we shall come to the conclusion which inspiration itself has announced, that “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;” so that the heavens and the earth, like one vast transparency, disclose the glory of his power, the inspirations of his wisdom, the luminous monuments of his beneficence and love.—Christ is “the beginning of the creation of God.”

Here, too, is the interesting peculiarity in this expression, that the Creator of heaven and of earth—the beginner of the creation of God—is declared to be “Christ.” Thus, then, creation and redemption are not antagonisms, they are at bottom in harmony—they cohere by unseen bands and ties with each other, and in one great author—Christ Jesus. There is something beautiful in this thought, that the hand of the crucified lighted up all the ever-burning lamps of the sky; pencilled with their beauty, and perfumed with their fragrance all the flowers of the earth; and evermore continues to the former their brightness, to the last their tints, to all things existence. There is something beautiful in the fact, that the Son of Man is the Creator of all things. There is in this the origin of all, an augury of what shall be the issue of all: wind and wave shall celebrate his glory, and star and flower and gem shall silently hymn his praise; and upon the earth, as upon a gem retrieved and restored, there shall be engraven the name, not merely of the God that made it, but that name which is above every name—the name of him that redeemed and restored it.

If Jesus be thus the maker, as he is the redeemer of all

things, is there not suggested by this fact a very interesting plea that we may use at the throne of grace—namely, that at least we are God our Saviour's workmanship? In one of the collects of the English Prayer-book these words occur—"O God . . . who hatest nothing that thou hast made." This is true. I do not think that God hates anything he has made: he made everything good, beautiful, and holy: sin is the foul blot that has fallen upon it—the fever that racks and convulses it; and these shall be removed and extinguished that it may be reinstated in its primeval goodness, and made to subserve its grand and original design. May you not, then, thus plead at a throne of grace? If your mind is so dark, and your heart so desponding, that when you pray to God, you cannot say to him, "O Lord, I am thy child; thou hast adopted me as thy son; therefore, O Lord, my Father, forgive me and bless me;" you may at least, in the very worst and darkest of circumstances, draw near to him, and say, "O Lord, my Creator, my Saviour, thou hast made me; that hand that was nailed to the cross fashioned me; thou hatest nothing that thou hast made; take me, creature of thy power, make me a monument of thy mercy, the subject of thy forgiveness; reinstate thy creature in thy love, and give me, who have the relation of thy creature, the affection of thy son, that I may praise and glorify thy name for ever."

Our Lord having thus introduced himself as "the Amen—the first and the last, the beginning of the creation of God, the Maker of all," next states what are his views of the state of the Church to which this epistle is addressed, in these necessarily true and expressive words, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot." There was no charge of heterodoxy against the Church of Laodicea: there was no imputation of error in any doctrine contained in her confession of faith. She appears to have been a "highly respectable Church;" to have been externally beautiful; a consistent rubrician in all respects, as far as the outward eye could take cognisance of her state; a model of what a Church should be; but when Christ looks at a Church, or examines an individual, he judges not "after the sight of the eyes, nor after the hearing of the ear." Man's eye sees the exterior only. With us the bended knee, the uplifted eye, the fervent and eloquent petition, are the evidences of re-

ligion; but Christ looks, not at the bended knee, but at the bended heart; he listens not to the expressions of the lips, but to the silent and half-expressed groans and longings of the soul within. Man judges after the outward appearance; Christ judges righteous judgment; and when the rest of the seven Churches probably pronounced the Church of Laodicea to be a model of ecclesiastical decorum, rich, and in need of nothing, the great Lord of that Church, when he looked down and saw what her heart was, proclaimed her to be "neither cold nor hot," but "lukewarm;" a state so abhorrent that he declared that therefore he would utterly reject her. Now what is this state which was "neither cold nor hot?" She had neither the anxiety of the earnest inquirer, nor the repose of the mature believer. She had all the symmetry of the exquisite statue, but all its insensibility also. She had "the form of godliness," in all its beauty; but she had none of that inner life, without which the perfect form is hateful in the sight of God. It is not excitement, ending in fanaticism, that we expect or demand in a Christian Church. We do not look for the heat of the torrid zone, nor do we desire the coldness of the polar regions; but what we ask for, and what Christianity will be, wherever Christianity is felt, is the equator of genial warmth, of Christian light and love. Christian love is too deep for fanaticism—it is too fervent for indifference. It is that divine mixture of principle and passion which has all the fixity of the one, and all the fervour of the other,—which enables a man to live divinely, which is even more difficult than to die a martyr. But this Church had none of that warmth. She had neither the coldness of direct opposition to God, nor the warmth of direct enthusiasm for God. She had the form; but she was destitute of the power. She gloried in her want of enthusiasm, fervour, or emotion. Was there consistency in this? Do we find in this world lukewarmness in any one department of real life? Do we find lukewarmness in the parliament? What zeal is exhibited there by the champions of one measure against the defenders of another! What earnestness in speaking! what enthusiasm in applauding sentiments to which five hundred souls give a response! In the House of Commons there is no coldness or lukewarmness or apathy on the one side or on the other. If

we turn to the Exchange, shall we discover any lukewarmness there? What anxious faces! what throbbing hearts! what agitation about some speculation which may end in the ruin, or issue in the new and great prosperity of him who has begun it! Shall we look to the streets of the city? to the stations of the railways? to the ports, the harbours, and the markets? Shall we visit the field of battle, the deck, the camp—anywhere if man be there? Do we find anything like lukewarmness where he believes his safety or his interest, or the safety and interests of his country and his kind in this world to be involved? Yet all this enthusiasm is for a corruptible crown; and shall we be lukewarm who strive for an incorruptible crown? They are enthusiastic in the pursuit of a phantom that perishes when they grasp it: is it possible that we can be cold, or careless, or apathetic in the pursuit of that which involves the glory of him who died for us, and the happiness of our precious and immortal souls? Yet is it not the fact, the strange and all but inexplicable fact, that men who will applaud enthusiasm in the merchant, heroism in the soldier, excitement in the senator, are yet the advocates and admirers, in Christianity, of coldness, lukewarmness, apathy, and indifference, alike in the pulpit and in the pew? It is not respectable to be enthusiastic in the pulpit; it is not becoming—what is worse, it is not fashionable, it is Methodistic, it is fanatical—to show that you are in earnest, or that you believe what you say in the pulpit. So says the world. But look at the merchant, who crosses broad seas, sails to distant lands, risks his health, his life, his happiness even, in the pursuit of fortune; is he mad? is he respectable? The world would say, What a persevering, industrious man! Yet he does it to obtain riches that may take wings and leave him, and which he must leave: we do it to obtain the unsearchable riches of Christ. Look at the husbandman, who toils in spring, watches in summer, reaps in autumn, amid a thousand anxieties: is he mad? No; his enthusiasm is commendable: yet he labours thus for the bread that perisheth; we for the bread that endureth unto everlasting life. Let a nation be threatened with invasion: “To arms!” is heard in every street; its peaceful citizens rush to join in the strife, and a nation rises up to defend its altars, its throne, and its hearths. Are they

mad? No; they are loyal, they do only what is their duty: and shall we be branded as madmen, when we feel enthusiastic in the advocacy or defence of that which affects the everlasting felicity and well-being of our souls? My dear friends, it is only scepticism that suffers enthusiasm in the things of Cæsar, and will not endure enthusiasm in the weightier and more important things of God. Look where you will—consult any analogy, and see that lukewarmness, indifference, or apathy, are chargeable alike with guilt and inconsistency in the sight of God and man.

In the second place, let me say that lukewarmness will never enable us to triumph over the obstacles with which we have to meet in our course to the judgment-seat. Satan is in earnest; and a cold minister in the pulpit will be no match for an earnest and active devil going about among the pews seeking whom he may devour. Surely, in such a case, it needs no prophet's eye or inspiration to predict what must be the issue of the conflict.

In the next place, it is impossible to believe the truths of the Gospel, and yet be lukewarm or apathetic. We are so constituted that our feelings form as integral a part of our nature as our judgment, our imagination, or our taste. We are not mere zoophytes; we do more than live—we reason, feel, reflect. We have feelings, and those feelings will be developed; and if they do not find nutriment and stimulus in the great truths of Christianity, they will draw nutriment and stimulus from the vices, the follies, and the caprices of this world. It is not a question whether we shall feel or not, for feel we must; but the real question is, shall our feelings be nourished from the well of life, or shall they be stimulated, excited, and nourished by the follies and the dissipation of this present world? The truths of Christianity, I submit, are fitted and calculated to awaken the feelings of mankind. When we hear of a Regulus, in ancient Rome, voluntarily surrendering his life for the safety of his country, our emotions are stirred by the recollection. When we read of a Howard visiting the prisons of Europe, and at his risk and amid sacrifice ministering to the outcast and degraded prisoner, the best feelings of our hearts are stirred to their very depths; and is it possible, then, that we can hear that one so loved us in our ruin—so loved us when we rebelled against the very love, that

embraced us—that he gave as the expression of that love, not worlds—not angel, nor archangel,—but his only-begotten Son; and gave him not merely to teach us, but gave him to be a victim for our sins, and to offer up himself upon the cross as an atoning sacrifice for us and for our salvation;—can we read or hear of so striking, so unparalleled a phenomenon in the history of the earth, and in the experience of man, and yet not have all the best feelings and sympathies of our nature raised to their highest pitch, and love with an enthusiastic love, and praise with intensest gratitude, him who loved us, and so bled and so died for us? It is impossible that we can believe the fact, and yet not be moved by it; and our belief of that fact can only be evidenced by the feelings that we evince concerning it. The man who feels no gratitude to God, nor love to Jesus, may disguise it as he likes, but in deed and in truth he does not believe that a God has suffered that sinners might be redeemed; or he believes in Calvary just as he believes in Salamis or Marathon; he believes in Jesus just as he believes in Alexander or in Cæsar, or in some cold and dead fact which belongs to another world, or another age, and has no living connexion with him or bearing on his destiny.

Let me ask you, Are your feelings awakened as you read the Gospel? Have your emotions of gratitude and love been quickened and excited as you hear the glad tidings? Has the fact that Christ has died for us made an impression correspondent to its magnitude upon your hearts, your feelings, your consciences? What is Christianity to you? what part has it in your experience? what virtue has it given to your nature; what fervour to your emotions? what influence has it left on your character? You believe just so far as you feel, and you feel just so far as you act.

Let me ask you, then, if Christ had never died, or if you had never heard of him, would your character and conduct be the same to-day that they now are? If the Bible had never been placed in your hands, would you be just as you now are? Then Christianity has not been received by you, its virtue has not touched you with its beneficent and transforming power. The atonement is not a dry fact that relates to angels, or a dead fact that belongs to antiquaries, but a plastic fact which is meant to

influence our mind, change our nature, raise our feelings, awaken our gratitude, create responsive love, enable us to say from the very heart — “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.” Think what the facts of the Gospel are: I fear, judging from my own sad experience, that we are apt often to repeat these facts—these solemn, startling, awakening facts—just as we read the occurrence of civil and profane and every-day history. But try, try in your sequestered moments to grasp and study them, — to realize this fact, for instance, that this air was breathed and made vocal with the words of very God in our humanity—that this earth was trodden by his holy feet, and that these sea-waves bore him—that he was nailed to that cross—that agonies which I cannot delineate, and which no mortal tongue has ever told, rent and tore his holy heart upon the accursed tree, and that all this agony—the agony of eternity and of infinitude compressed into moments, was for us, and for us sinners, callous to our need of it: and then let me ask, what effect does this fact produce? Is it true? If true, the wonder is that it does not electrify mankind: it is the awful evidence that a terrible disease has fallen upon us and corrupted our nature to the core, that we can hear such a truth and be insensate as icicles, or at most, “lukewarm, neither cold nor hot.”

The results of the Gospel are fitted to render lukewarmness unnatural, and to awaken man's feeling to the utmost. What are these? If all the effects of Christianity be, that some shall be rich in this world, and others poor, — some shall be learned, and others ignorant,—you might justly feel apathy. But far different are the issues of our present probation — they stretch into eternity; the words that are now dropped into your ears, will awaken their sounds at the judgment morn, either as the tones of that jubilee in which you shall ever mingle to praise and glorify redeeming love, or as the reverberations and the crashes of that thunder which shall be the knell of your everlasting and irreversible perdition. Men and brethren, not separating myself from you, we are speaking and hearing for eternity. A painter was once asked, Why he took so much care in the execution of his paintings? the answer he gave was, “I paint for eternity.” He desired to obtain a world-lasting name. And if he for an

earthly and corruptible reward underwent so much labour and took so great pains, should not we speak with subduing solemnity of utterance, and hear with thrilling interest, and act with deep and earnest energy, for an eternal one? Eternity is that inexhaustible and incomprehensible word in which our life culminates, that makes all the difference. In a very few years, — it may be, to some of us, in a very few days, — the outward tent in which we have tabernacled shall be struck and be folded and disappear, but its inmate emerges only into greater light; this soul which now thinks and feels, and hopes and desponds alternately in every one — this living principle, which now meditates in one and puts off in another, — struggles and battles with conscience in a third, — would be a Christian if he could give up his lusts in a fourth, — dares not be a Christian because it would interfere, he thinks, with his happiness, in a fifth, — this live spark called the soul, which is, after all, the man, and of which the body is but the covering, or the outward machinery that enables it to communicate with the outward world, — must stand before God, and receive there, either the sentence of endless suffering, or the inheritance of everlasting joy.

Let us ask ourselves, and let us meet the question, Is there such a place as hell? is that word a bugbear wherewith to frighten children, or is it a reality? I cannot conceive of heaven without a hell; I cannot conceive the necessity of the Gospel, without granting the prior necessity of eternal punishment of sin; and if it too be a fact, that the many are called and that the few only are chosen; if to be lost is not a strange or unfrequent thing; can that man be possessed of common sense — does he show moderate consistency if neither lunatic nor demon — does he fail to acquire a tremendous responsibility, who will venture — dare — to put off the anxious consideration of the great and solemn prospects of eternity, till it may be too late to consider them in time, or his body too feeble to grapple with them through disease? Young men, I speak especially to you — do let us consider this subject; do pause and entertain the question, Whither we are going? what hereafter will be to us? what is to be the issue for ever? What is the meaning of this preaching every Sunday, this hearing every Sunday, this circulation of Bibles, this spread-

ing of the Gospel, this stir and bustle about God — the soul — eternity? I am not here to entertain you, or to do so much work for so much pay. We are handling sacred and momentous things; we are here to gather light wherein to see what our future state shall be. Our souls may be lost, and for ever.

If Abraham could be lukewarm, when he pleaded for the cities of the plain — if Moses could be lukewarm when he raised the serpent of brass, and bade the dying look that they might live — if David could be lukewarm when he sought to propitiate the destroying angel, as he smote down thousands at every blow — if Aaron could be lukewarm when he stood between the living and the dead — then may ministers of the Gospel be lukewarm when they preach such solemn truths, and hearers of the Gospel be “neither cold nor hot” when they listen to them. My dear friends, let me ask you again to study and examine the disclosures of the Gospel. If they be indisputably true, as they are, receive them into the very depths of your souls; let them put forth their full force within you, as plastic principles, as living effective sayings, as words whose echoes are joys or judgments in eternity: if they be not true, then act consistently; reject them, denounce them, treat them, not with apathy, but with hostility; they are in such a case bitter impostures, try to exterminate them. I solemnly believe that there is not a spot on which a man can stand with consistency, till he take his place with blaspheming atheists, in that vacuum in which no soul can breathe and no wing can soar, and say, “No God,” or with the evangelical Christian who can pour forth from the very heart the inadequate expression of its fervour, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

Let me ask you at your leisure to read a book which I have studied with much pleasure, and, I trust, not without profit, “James’s Earnest Ministry.” An excellent elder of the Church of Scotland, Mr. Hope, has made a present of a copy of this book to every parochial clergyman in the Church of Scotland. Earnestly do I pray that upon the reading of such a book a blessing may descend, and that the clergy of that Church may at last discover that we have had enough of intellectual preachers—

more than enough of metaphysical preachers—plenty of popular preachers; what we require—what the age—what souls and Christianity require, are living, simple, earnest ministers. I believe that one earnest preacher of eternal truth, however deficient he be in eloquence, in logic, in talent, is worth twenty of your intellectual preachers whom gaping crowds rush to hear, and dying hundreds applaud, and pass to the judgment-seat without one responsive feeling of love to God, or anxiety about their precious souls. Such crowds thirst after mere splendour of diction, and they have their reward. To them buttercups in the field are more precious than seams of gold below it. The earnest infidel is more than a match for the lukewarm Christian. To what is Mahometanism indebted for its spread? To the earnestness of Mahomet and those that followed him. To what is Popery indebted for its triumph? To the lukewarmness of Protestants, and to the zeal, the enthusiasm, the devotedness of Roman Catholic priests. To what is it that Tractarians owe their progress? If those Tractarians were hypocrites, I should not fear them; but I believe them to be men thoroughly in earnest, and that they are prepared to sacrifice and to suffer in order to support what they believe to be the truth, but what we believe and know on no uncertain grounds to be fatal deception. And it is because the Romanist, the Mahometan, the Tractarian, are enduring, earnest, devoted men, that their errors spread, that perverts are made to them, and that Protestants give way before them.

I believe that the day is coming, nay, is almost come, when the great battle will be between living, earnest Christians, and living, earnest Papists, infidels, and skeptics. It will be the life of God against the life of Satan. You cannot but see in looking around you in the world, that what have been called “shams” are all being dissipated; hypocrisies are getting more and more at a discount; the sea of seeming ebbs every day, and men become realities. I see infidelity at length open, manly, earnest, active; I see Popery becoming undisguised, earnest, active. Oh! let not us, who have the truth, and know the truth, and I trust in some degree feel the truth, be “neither cold nor hot,” but lukewarm, at such a crisis. The ark of the Lord is committed

to us : great destinies are, humanly speaking, in our hands ; God's glory is in the midst of us, to be obscured, betrayed, or rendered more luminous. Let us contend for the faith earnestly ; let us fight the good fight ; let us lay hold with no equivocal grasp on eternal life ; let us live for the Gospel, and, if needs be, let us die for it. The world tells you constantly, extremes are bad, moderation is the right thing. My dear friends, in matters of the soul, extremes are the highest sense, moderation is the greatest madness. There is, as I have told you, no medium between cold freezing scepticism — cold, barren, without God, instinct with hatred, enmity, and contempt, and the living Christianity which lives and dies for Christ Jesus.

I ask you then, hearers and readers, if you have feelings, where do they cluster ? on what soil do they grow ? what is their nutriment — where is the place where they would culminate for ever ? If you know the Gospel, is it possible that you can fail to feel its power ? If you believe the Gospel, is it possible that you can fail to be influenced by it ? And if we do feel, and are conscious that whatever else we be, we are in earnest — if our souls glow, as they should burn and glow, with divine love — then, fathers in your families, brethren in your closets, all of you in the sanctuary, pray that there may be, what is indeed needed, a revival of living religion in the midst of us — a pouring out of the Holy Spirit of God, that with an abundant blessing there may be abundant results, and Christianity may rise from the dust in which it has been laid, and put on her bridal raiment, her coronation robes, and make ready as a bride to meet Him whose footfall is already heard at our doors, and who will come, and that right speedily.

LECTURE XXIX.

DIVINE COUNSEL.

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”—Rev. iii. 17, 18.

I HAVE already explained the condition of this Church as expressed by the word “lukewarmness.” I endeavoured to show what were its characteristics, and what was its nature. We have in the verses I have selected for this evening’s lecture, the secret source of that false peace on the one hand, and of that lukewarmness by which this Church was characterised upon the other. Her peace was raised upon a false foundation, and therefore it was deceptive; her cry was, “Peace, peace,” when there was really, and before God, no peace at all. The peace that stands every ordeal, that will gather strength from over-passing years, and immortality from surrounding decay, is that peace which is based on truth, which flourishes in light, and lives in the full and conscious revelation of all that heaven is, upon the one hand, and of all that hell is declared to be, upon the other hand. Peace, to be lasting—let it never be forgotten—must be built upon truth; and were you called upon to part with one of these graces, part with peace, which is an annual—dying and living alternately; but not with truth, which is a perennial, and if lost, not easily recovered and replanted. Controversy for truth is duty: truth is the precious thing, never to be compromised, never to be concealed, still less to be conceded.

This Church, then, believed, under the influence of false peace,

that she was "rich, and increased in goods, and had need of nothing." Perhaps this means that she thought herself spiritually rich, and that she had no need of increased spiritual riches; or perhaps, as is more probable, it alludes to the wealth of the world which filled her coffers, and made her suppose that therefore her heart was replenished with the riches of eternity, and that she had all she required. If it was the first, namely, the proud persuasion that she was possessed of spiritual riches, the very thought was evidence of her real poverty. He that feels he has most of the riches of grace, knows he has little in comparison with what he ought to have, and none that he can boast of. He that is most advanced in spiritual knowledge is ever the most humbled, because of the vast and unreachd extent of progress that lies before him. The horizon widens as we move; the space dilates as we rise; until he who soared to the third heaven, and viewed scenes that were unspeakable and replete with glory, came down to earth after so splendid and glorious an apocalypse, and proclaimed himself "not worthy to be called an apostle," "least of saints," and "chiefest of sinners." It is thus that the soul loosens itself from worthless things, in proportion as it attaches itself to heavenly things; and the farther it sees, and the fuller and richer it is, the more emphatically it proclaims itself poor and needy. Truly and sweetly does the poet sing:—

"The saint that wears heaven's brightest crown,
In deepest adoration bends;
The weight of glory bows him down
The most when most his soul ascends.
Nearest the throne itself must be
The footstool of humility."

Nor less beautifully does the poet sing:—

"The bird that soars with highest wing,
Builds on the ground her lowly nest,
And she that doth most sweetly sing,
Sings in the shade when all things rest.
In lark and nightingale we see
What honour hath humility."

He who hath most is least proud of it. We lost our locks of strength, our attributes of beauty, in Paradise; and to boast, in this blighted earth, of what we are by nature, is to boast of what is our shame; while to boast of what we are by grace, is incompatible with the possession of real grace at all.

But I cannot suppose that it was this Church's spiritual wealth that she boasted of; the probability is rather that it was her earthly wealth that blinded her eyes to her deficiency in spiritual and true riches; and if so, how great and bitter the mistake! And yet, is not this the blind judgment of the world still? It estimates a man, not by his excellence *within*, but by his possessions *without*. The question that is most frequently asked, when it is desired to ascertain a man's worth, is not what *is* he, but what *has* he. In this world, men are very much valued as the cinnamon tree is valued, of which the wood, the inner part, is worth nothing; while the bark, the outer part, is alone valuable. How false and spurious is such an estimate! The soul ruined cannot be retrieved by all the wealth of a Croesus; salvation lost cannot be restored by all the riches in the world. There are wants in man's soul that the wealth of the Indies can never satisfy; and there are necessities, the consequences of man's moral and spiritual ruin, in repairing and replenishing which, wealth is but so much dross that may be thus grasped. Thus, whether it was the one or the other—her spiritual wealth, so presumed to be, or her material wealth, so felt to be—her judgment was deception and delusion, for the judgment of the Son of God was "Thou art poor, and blind, and miserable, and wretched."

Now, in looking at this, the judgment of Christ, let us never forget that we are not what we think we are, nor what others say we are; but what Christ pronounces us to be. What I think of myself may be delusion; what another proclaims about me may be flattery; but what Christ pronounces concerning us is everlasting and immutable truth. Whatever, therefore, be your real or your imaginary wealth, it is a wealth that has no currency above the skies; it is gold which, weighed in the scales of the sanctuary, has no specific gravity. Be it in the shape of raiment, or be it in the shape of friends, or be it in the shape of cash,—whatever be the form or body of your wealth, it is destitute of

substance ; you cannot carry it beyond the grave ; it will have no currency at a judgment-day ; it will do nothing good, permanently good, for your immortal soul. There is a moth in the fairest robe ; there is a worm in the loftiest cedar ; there is oxide in the purest gold ; death treads upon life, eternity upon time ; and the judgment-seat, where material possessions are of no account, is daily at our doors.

But not only is this Church pronounced by Christ to be "poor," but also "blind." You may see, if you are in the condition of this Church, clearly enough the light of time ; but you may be blind, wholly blind, to the light of eternity. You may see all that is beautiful in the things of earth, and be able, with connoisseur discernment, to appreciate and to value them ; but you may yet neither see the light, nor appreciate the glory, of the things of God. The man that sees no beauty in holiness, no attraction in the Bible, no excellence in the Saviour, no preciousness in his soul — may have eyes to see the things of the world ; but he is inscribed in the register of God, where the registration cannot be expunged or reversed, "poor, and blind, and naked."

But not only was this Church "blind," but she was "naked." The robe which we had when God made us at the first, good, beautiful, and holy, we lost in Paradise ; and the fig-leaves which we gather from the blighted trees of nature are but an apology for that righteousness, and disclose only more painfully the very nakedness they are meant to cover. We are, therefore, by nature naked. We have no defence from the summer's heat, nor from the winter's cold ; we are destitute of that robe—that "first robe"—that "raiment white and clean," which is "the righteousness of saints," and without which we cannot be entitled to heaven, or meet with the favour and the acceptance of God. Here is man by nature ; "poor," because destitute of the only wealth that has currency in heaven ; "blind," because insensible to the only beauty that lasts for ever ; "naked," because destitute of that only righteousness,—obedience,—perfect obedience, to a perfect law, which God requires now as he required in Paradise, and without which we can never see him.

And, lastly, this Church is stated to be "wretched,"—as well

as "poor, blind, naked." If a man be not a Christian, his happiness is but a dream, his greatest joy is but the intoxication of a moment. I care not what your rank, your riches, your renown, your talents, your interest may be, if you are destitute of living and vital religion within you, you know that in your moments of calmest, soberest reflection, there is gall and wormwood within you—a bitterness and wretchedness which you cannot be rid of. Let me give you a specimen of this fact. Lord Chesterfield, who taught his son every outward elegance, but forgot to teach him the cultivation of inward graces—who preferred the gentleman to the Christian, and courtesy of manner to purity of morals—made the experiment of his theory, and witnessed the result. He thus writes, at the age of sixty-six:—"I have recently read Solomon with a kind of sympathetic feeling. I have been as wicked and as vain, though not as wise, as he; but I am now old enough and wise enough to feel and attest the truth of his reflection, 'All is vanity and vexation of spirit.'" Let me give you another instance, of which you have doubtless all heard—the celebrated Madame Malibran, the most accomplished vocalist and singer that perhaps ever appeared in our country. One day, as she returned from a splendid circle, where she was the object of universal and marked admiration, and where she seemed the very personification of all that can make one happy, she was congratulated by one who saw the admiration she excited, and heard the applause with which she was received. She immediately burst into tears, and said, "I am but a poor opera singer, and I am no more." A singer whose performances have recently made a very great impression on the public mind, and whose personal purity and worth are equal to her artistic talents, made the remark to a friend of mine, who told me of it,—“It is not me that they admire, but my voice; and that cannot make me happy, though it gives them delight.” Let me give you a yet more striking specimen in Goethe, one of the most accomplished geniuses that Europe ever produced. This celebrated German poet, orator, historian, made this observation at the close of his life:—"They have called me the child of fortune; nor have I any reason to complain of the events of my life: yet it has been nothing but labour and sorrow; and in seventy-five years I have not had four

weeks of true comfort." God says, "The natural man is wretched:" the accomplished gentleman on the one side; the celebrated artiste and vocalist upon the other; the most renowned of all literati, for a third; and the noble and celebrated poet, Lord Byron, whose last poem is proof, for a fourth; all testify, from the depths of their more or less agonized and disappointed hearts, that God's word is true, and that man without religion is "poor, and blind, and naked, and miserable." True happiness must be adapted to the dignity of man, or it cannot be happiness at all; for though man is fallen, sinful, guilty, ruined, yet there are the fragments about him of his aboriginal grandeur: out of the smouldering ashes break forth at times live sparks of the lingering glory, indicating how grand he once was. With all the ruin of which man's soul is the victim, it is yet too vast, too magnificent, to be pleased with baubles, or to find its happiness in trifles. It is the evidence of man's fall that he seeks happiness on earth; it is the evidence of man's greatness that nothing upon earth can bring happiness to him. An angel cannot find happiness in blowing soap-bubbles, like a child; a philosopher cannot derive true delight from playing at marbles; nor will a man find happiness anywhere but in union and communion with God, his Father, in Jesus Christ. Little things, earthly things, may amuse us; great things, eternal things, alone can satisfy us.

And happiness must not only be fitted to man's dignity, but it must be upon a permanent basis. If I lived in a palace far more glorious than Aladdin ever dreamed of, but if I knew that it was liable to be blown down by every night's wind, I should have very little happiness in it. Or, if I occupied a situation with a stipend however large, knowing that another was likely to dislodge me the next day, I could not have very great enjoyment in it. Or, if I had beauty which was liable every moment to fade, or health every instant to be weakened, then I could have no real happiness in these, because of the uncertainty and precariousness of the source of that happiness. There must, therefore, be in the happiness which meets my soul and satisfies that soul, a permanent basis. Can that be happiness which will not stand one beam of eternity?—that is dissipated the instant that the light of the judgment-seat touches it?—that flourishes only in the

dark, and can live only where there is no light?—that refuses to look at heaven, at responsibility, at God, at eternity, because conscious it would be disturbed and dislodged by it? Yet, such is the world's happiness, which is only another name for wretchedness.

The natural man therefore is "poor, and blind, and naked, and miserable." And to crown his calamity, to increase the intensity of his misfortune to the highest pitch, "he knows it not." "*Thou knowest not that thou art blind, and naked, and miserable, and wretched.*"

Now having seen what is our state by nature, let us listen to Christ's counsel; the best advice that was ever given—the advice that, like all good advice, is freely given, but so seldom taken. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." How gracious are these words! He does not say, "I command thee," nor "I threaten you," but in a truly evangelical formula, "I counsel thee." Herein is the difference between the commands of the law and the commands of the Gospel. In the law it is the language of a severe legislator, "thou shalt," and "thou shalt not;" "do, and live;" "do not, and die." But in the Gospel the command is embosomed in the benediction, and crowned with the promise. The command is conveyed to us in a shape that is sweet to the heart, and musical to the ear: it is not said, "Be pure," "Be hungry after righteousness," "Be meek;" but there is first pronounced the blessing that introduces to the duty, and then the duty is crowned with the promise, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;" the blessing introducing the command, and the promise crowning that command. So here our Lord, as a friend, says, "I counsel you," I beseech you, as one that sympathises with you,—not to continue in that state which must end in your everlasting ruin; but to accept that provision which is freely offered to you, and which must end in your eternal happiness." "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." Incomparable riches are "the unsearchable riches of Christ," as they are called in another place—those riches of which Solomon speaks, when he says, "The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver,

and the gain thereof than fine gold; it is more precious than rubies, and all things that thou canst desire are not to be compared unto it." And such riches—the riches of pardon, the riches of sanctification, the riches of redemption, the riches of peace, the riches of holiness—are alone satisfying.

I have told you that man's soul cannot be satisfied with anything upon earth. By a great law of his nature, it must be so. But here is that which will satisfy man's soul. "He that loveth silver," it is said, "shall not be satisfied with silver." You will always find that such is the case. A man's first wish perhaps is, "Oh that I had only 100*l.* a-year;" he thinks he might be comfortable on that; and when he has it, he wishes it double; and when he has thousands a-year, what does he wish then? he wishes that he were only a baronet; and then he wishes he were something greater still; verifying at every stage of his rise this statement of the wise man, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver." It may be written upon all the coronets of Europe, the brightest that are worn; and upon all the crowns of emperors, and kings, and queens, the most weighty that are around royal brows: upon your wealth, your honours, your amusements, and upon all that man loves, and with which he tries to supersede his duties and responsibilities to God, "Whoso drinketh of this water shall thirst again;" but upon real, living religion, upon pardon, holiness, peace, on the Bible that reveals them, it may be, and it is, written, "Whoso drinketh of this water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." It is when the taper-lights of time begin to grow dim, that the lights of glory shine so resplendently upon us; it is when the springs of this world are dry, that the fountain of living waters overflows; it is when the music of this world is hushed, that the sweet sounds of our Father's voice ring so musically in our hearing. The enjoyments and the pleasures of this world are like brooks which dry up in the summer heat, just when most we want them; but the joys, the pleasures, the happiness of real religion are like the streams that come down from the Alpine glaciers, where the avalanche sleeps perpetually, which flow deepest, coolest, and

clearest in summer time, when all other brooks and streams around are dry.

Such is human happiness when it is based upon human things; and such is human happiness when it is based upon divine things. And I may add, that the gold and silver, the wealth, here spoken of, differs from all other possessions, inasmuch as the latter have not an enduring basis. This world's wealth, by a mysterious power, can put forth wings and take flight without notice; but that world's wealth has no wings wherewith to fly away, but he who possesses it is unchangeably rich. In this world's wealth, the fig-tree may fail to blossom, there may be no fruit on the vine and no herd in the stall; but of that world's wealth it is true that it endureth for ever. Of this world's wealth it may be said, "Thou fool; this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be?" but of these better riches, it is written that they are unsearchable and unspeakable, and can never be taken from us by thief or robber breaking through to steal them. It is here also declared of this wealth which Christ counsels us to buy, that it is "tried." What is the greatest recommendation to a man when he is a candidate for any situation? That he is a "tried man." What is the best recommendation of a ship that is to bear you across the Atlantic? That it has buffeted many a storm, and landed many a freight in safety on the other side. And what is the greatest recommendation that can be given to these unsearchable riches, to this heavenly gold, to these everlasting blessings? They are tried! men have tried them, and have never been disappointed. These unsearchable riches, this fine gold, Luther tried, and found it sustain him in the cell, the market-place, before the council; while preaching, while living, while dying. Jeremiah tried it, and he could sing psalms in the deep dungeon in which tyranny had placed him. John tried it; and when in the desert isle of Patmos, he saw pass before him a panorama of splendour, of beauty, and of glory, the dim rays of which are still so glorious. John Bunyan tried it when in a prison, and he found it sustain and comfort him, for he has declared that his happiest days were spent in the gaol, when the pilgrim in the fancy of the prisoner in the cell, was his only companion. All this leads to the old conclusion, that

the secret of a man's happiness is not in what he has, but in what he is; and the true way, the Christian way to improve mankind, is not to change their circumstances, but to change their hearts. It is not the beautiful home that makes the happy heart; but it is the happy heart that makes the beautiful home: it is not what is around the man, but what is within the man, that is the secret of joy, satisfaction, and peace: and most men who complain of want of happiness in this world are very much like a traveller with a thorn in his foot; he complains of the roughness of the road, and thinks, if it were only macadamized, how quickly and agreeably he should get along, and forgets that the secret of his slow progress, and the source of his pain, are not in the roughness of the road, but in the thorn in the foot that walks the road.

Our Lord then says, Come, see this gold, this unsearchable riches, this tried gold, and "buy of me." But you say, "How are we to buy? the very word seems to crush all hope of obtaining." The answer is, the word "buy," in our old English, means not "to purchase," but "to bring near." The strict meaning of "buy" is, "to bring nigh;" and such is the meaning of the word in the passage, "Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." The word is used to denote that the thing is precious, because men pay only for that which is precious; and hence you find that men prize the most valuable things only when they pay for them. If Bibles are given away gratis, the probability is, that in the course of a week you will find them sold or pledged. Make them pay a penny a-week for their Bibles, and they are valued, kept, and used. The word "buy," therefore, is applied to this fine gold—to real, living religion, to pardon, to holiness, to happiness, to peace, in order to denote the preciousness of it; and it means, have it, bring it near to you, at whatever sacrifice; if it require the sacrifice of time, the sacrifice of labour, of watchfulness, the surrender of a right hand, or the pulling out of a right eye,—at all hazards, at all sacrifices, get possession of that gold, that fine gold which is tried in the fire; which alone can make you unspeakably, because eternally, happy. You are told where the market or the sale is; "buy of me:" it is not said you are to go to the priest, or to the saint, or

to the angel to purchase it, but "buy of me." No priest, presbyter, or prelate in Christendom has anything to spare for you. Each has just enough for himself. And when we speak of him that becomes a Christian as instantly becoming a missionary, and him that receives as instantly feeling it his duty to give, we do not mean that a Christian can part with any portion of the grace of God he has in his heart, so as to give that portion to a brother, a sister, a friend, a neighbour. We have nothing to spare for another of the grace which God has given us. What we can spare is only advice, instruction—just what the wise virgins spared to the foolish when they said, "Go unto them that sell." Buy of Christ the fine gold that is tried in the fire, in order that you may be rich. He is the only fountain; his is the only market; and from him alone can we receive grace and glory, and all good things.

But it is added also, that you are to buy of him, not only gold that you may be rich, but "white raiment, that you may be clothed." What "white raiment" is this? We have an allusion to it in the parable of the prodigal son; "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him:" it is literally translated, "Bring forth that robe, the best one, and put it on him." It is also described in such words as these, "raiment white and clean, which is the righteousness of saints." We have it in such advice as this, "Put on Christ;" and again in such a name as this, "The Lord our righteousness." It denotes, therefore, the acceptance of that righteousness which is the privilege offered to all, and the possession of that righteousness which alone is the Christian's right to glory and title to heaven. My dear friends, the Gospel is not a diluted law; it is as true at this moment as it was when the law was pronounced amid the thunders, and revealed amid the lightnings of Sinai, "Present a perfect righteousness, and you shall be saved; present an imperfect righteousness, and you shall be lost for ever." God demands of you and of me to-day, the very same righteousness that he demanded from the first—perfect obedience, or irreparable and irreversible ruin; but the difference lies here; when he asked that righteousness of Adam, Adam had to prepare and present it in his own personal standing as an obedient creature, in order to entitle him to the reward. We, on

the other hand, knowing and feeling that we have no such righteousness, accept a righteousness already made, and present that righteousness as our perfect title to heaven. It is not true that "do and live" is now reversed by an equivalent "believe and live." Faith is no more my title to heaven than work is. The distinction is this: Faith receives the righteousness now; man performed that righteousness of old. Under the law, I should have to *be* righteous that I might be justified; under the Gospel I have to *accept* righteousness that I may be justified. And this righteousness is revealed in such a passage as this; "He that knew no sin was made sin for us," that our sins being laid upon him, we might be made the righteousness of God by him, his righteousness being laid upon us. Christ wore our polluted rags, and endured the agony and the cross; we wear his spotless, seamless, perfect robe, and we inherit his everlasting peace, joy, and felicity. Just as it was righteous in God to pour down the expressions of his wrath upon the innocent Lamb, because he wore our tainted fleece, so it will be but faithful and just in God to pour down upon us the expressions of his love, because we, the stray sheep, wear the spotless fleece of that holy and immaculate Lamb. Jesus was not a sinner when he died: we shall not be personally righteous and worthy when we live. There was no demerit in him when he drank the cup of that curse to its dregs; and there will be no merit in us when we drink the cup of that blessing for ever and ever. He suffered because of others' sins; we shall be saved because of another's righteousness: thus the law shall have had its due, and yet we alone inherit all the joy, while Christ, and Christ alone, shall have all the glory. Like Levites in their spotless robes, we shall tread the floor of that grand temple; like true patricians, we shall walk with him in white; like kings and conquerors, we shall sit with him on his throne, even as he also overcame and sat down with his Father on his throne.

And then, adds the great adviser, "Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." He pronounced the church poor, he bids her take wealth; he pronounced the church wretched, he bids her take happiness; he pronounced her blind, he bids her take light. Are we then blind? It is implied that we are

so from such a passage as this, "That the eyes of your understanding being enlightened : " and the Psalmist says, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." The Evangelist John writes, in one of his epistles, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you." And again, the prophet promises, "All thy children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

Now here is the distinction between a man-taught, or priest-taught, and a God-taught person. The man-taught person never rises higher than the priest, the ceremony, the sacrament, the church. The God-taught person comes to Christ; "He that is taught of God cometh unto me," says our Lord. A stream never can rise higher than its source. Let a rivulet start at a thousand feet high, and it will rise to that level again : and so a religion from man rises only to man ; a religion from the priest rises again to the priest ; a religion from the church carries itself only to the church again ; a religion from God lifts a man above the priest, the church, the ceremony, and leaves him not till he basks in the splendours of the beatific vision, and in the presence, and amid the glory of God. The eye-salve that is here spoken of is called in another place, "the unction of the Holy One." The ointment which was prepared for the high priest of old was an ointment which it was blasphemy to imitate, and he who ventured to imitate it was put to death. This eye-salve is, no doubt, the Holy Spirit of God. I know no stronger proof of the dreadful corruption of which man is the victim by the fall than this fact, that it needs not only a God to redeem him, but a God to convince him that he is redeemable at all. Men ask you, Where is a text to show that man is corrupt? I answer, here is the evidence ; In vain God has bowed the heavens to open my grave ; God must again bow the heavens to open my understanding to believe it. It needs not only my God in my nature to redeem me from the curse ; but it needs the Holy Ghost, who is God, to come into my bosom and persuade me to accept of the redemption that is offered me "without money and without price."

Never forget this, my dear friends, that we can never pray, nor preach, nor hear, nor feel, nor know, nor make one step in

the right and upward direction, until the Holy Spirit of God enlightens and sanctifies and directs us.

I pray that you may have this eye-salve, that you may possess "this unction of the Holy One;" that you may see your pride to be your shame, your beauty to be your deformity, your glory to be but dust, your strength to be but weakness, your wisdom folly. Pray that you may have this eye-salve, this Holy Spirit; that you may see sin to be *the* evil, the only evil in the whole universe of God; that you may see holiness to be the chief beauty; living religion to be the purest happiness; enthusiastic devotion to Christ to be the greatest moderation and the gravest wisdom. Pray that you may see your soul to be precious, your Bible precious, your Saviour to be, if possible, more precious still. Pray that you may be led to see this, if you see no more;—no infallible directory but the word of God; no atoning or expiatory virtue anywhere but in the cross and passion of Christ; no regenerative or sanctifying or quickening power but in the Spirit of God; no way to heaven but that of which Christ is the door; no fitness for heaven but that of which the Spirit of God is the author, and no obstruction to your instant peace with God but what is in yourselves.

"Tis thine to cleanse the heart,
To sanctify the soul,
To pour fresh life in every part,
And new create the whole.

"Dwell, Spirit, in our hearts,
Our minds from bondage free;
Then shall we know, and praise and love,
The Father, Son, and Thee."

LECTURE XXX.

SOVEREIGN LOVE.

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.”—REV. iii. 19.

THESE words are part of the epistle to the Church of Laodicea. They are addressed to her immediately after the counsel which the Lord had given her to buy of him “gold tried in the fire that she might be rich;” and in order to comfort those in the midst of her who were the people of God, amid the fiery trial to which she was to be soon subjected, God tells her, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” Mr. Winslow, in a very excellent work called “Grace and Truth,” makes the following remark on this text: “Had we not a ‘thus saith the Lord’ for this truth, its greatness would render it incredible.” Christ loves us, and because he loves us, he does not let us alone. Is it then true that we are loved of Christ? that we sinners are loved in spite of our sins, loved of Christ? His manger, his cross, his passion, his agony, and his bloody sweat, are all the evidence of this one proposition, “Christ loved us.” Every fact in the Saviour’s history—every sermon that he preached—every bright incident that broke forth in his life—every circumstance that surrounded him, are additional evidence that he loved us. Nor when we come to the last scene of his sad and awful biography, is there less proof of his love. The patience of the victim—the forbearance of the Almighty—the fact that no earthquake swallowed up the murderers of the Lord of Glory,—that no lightning smote and no thunderbolt blasted them—the awful eclipse that shrouded all, in which no word was uttered but love—the awful silence that pervaded all in which no accent was audible but love,

are eloquent and decisive evidences of his own assertion, for which, to quote the language of the author to whom I have alluded, we have a "thus saith the Lord"—"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."

Having ascertained the fact that Christ loves us, let us try to ascertain the nature of his love, by its characteristics. I will not dwell on them; I will briefly, but as distinctly as possible, recapitulate them. In the first place, it is an everlasting love. Christ's love to us was not a sudden impulse that rose within his mind under some sudden influence, and, like man's, evaporated when he had expressed it; but it was an uncreated, and, literally and strictly, an everlasting spring in the bosom of God. "I have loved thee," he says, "with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." How grand is this truth! that we, sinners saved, are the subjects of a love that glowed and burned, and panted for its egress before the worlds were created, or the angels sung together for joy at the completion of the once beautiful works of God! Secondly, it is an unfailing love. It rose from the depths of eternity, and it will roll into the depths of eternity again. It lasts while God reigns and ages roll. It can never be exhausted; when it has overflowed and overwhelmed, if I may so speak, the greatest number of the greatest sinners, it still is unexhausted, as much as if it had never flowed forth at all. He himself has told us, "a woman may forget her babe, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb, yet will not I forget thee." In the third place, it is a sovereign love. When God loves, he loves as God; when a creature loves, he loves as a creature. A creature loves an object, because in the object he sees something beautiful or good; God loves an object though in it there be nothing good, in order to make it, by his creative power, alike beautiful and good. Our love is created within us by an object without us; God's love is sovereign. We love the beautiful and good because they are so; God loves the guilty and the depraved in order to make them what they should be.

This love, in the fourth place, is a distinguishing love. There is one fact in the Bible which has always in some degree perplexed me; and the more I think of it, the less am I able to

comprehend or explain it: Why did Christ in his love pass by the higher nature, the angelic, that fell, and seize in its saving grasp the lower nature, humanity, that also fell? There is no answer to this question, except such as is supplied by the characteristic I have specified; it is a distinguishing love: of this we must say to Jesus just what he said to his Father, "Even so, for thus it seemed good in thy sight."

In the next place, Christ's love to us is a costly love. It cost an infinite descent, unspeakable travail, agony, and death: he endured the cross—he drank our curse—he bore our burden in his own body on the tree—he expressed the intensity of his love by the agony of his suffering for us; we can only estimate the greatness of the price he paid by the portion of it we can count. It was not by gold or silver, or any such corruptible thing, but by his own precious blood that he redeemed: "Ye are bought with a price,"—"a price," as if all in the world were not even worthy of the word "price."

The next characteristic of this love is, unchangeable. The love of the Saviour is the "same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" it never changes. If his love were to fluctuate and change with the ebbs and flows of our love to him, we should have been cast off long ere now. But he loved us in our ruin; and our after unworthiness, criminal as it is, has not lessened that love. He loved us in spite of our sins at the first, and he will love us still in spite of our sins; and having loved us from the first, he will love us to the last. He is the unchangeable God: he changes not, therefore we sons of Jacob are not consumed.

But, it may be asked, who are these whom he thus loves? They are known by various names in the nomenclature of man; distinguished sometimes by epithets that are good, stained at other times by others that are evil: but whatever be their distinctions among men, they have but one feature and one relationship before God—they are the sons of God—they believe on the name of his Son Christ Jesus. They are called "the elect," if you like; the justified, the sanctified, the adopted, the sons, the heirs of God. All these are but the varied names of the same distinguished and happy class, who are the objects of this love, and

come under its influence by the exercise of faith, or trust, or confidence in the word of the Father, and in the testimony of Christ Jesus.

Seeing that to be the objects of this^d love is so precious, can I prove that God the Saviour thus loves me? Have we any evidence within us, or any fact without us, or anything to which we can appeal, that will satisfy our minds that we are the objects of this love? Let me reply, that the first question, and the principal question we have to ask, is not, Why should we be the objects of this love? but, Why should we *not* be the objects of this love? Did Christ die for sinners? Then why not me? Did he suffer and bleed for the chiefest of sinners? Then why not for us? Did he love Peter, and Mary Magdalen, and the persecuting Paul? Did he wash them in his blood, and clothe them in his righteousness, and turn them, one from a persecutor into a preacher, and the other from being a grievous sinner into a daughter of God? Then why should I conclude he has retreated from me? Is there anything peculiar in me that excludes me? any reason in the heights, or any reason in the depths, why I should not be the object of the love of God? There is none. Our own suspicion, unbelief, rebellion, alone wilfully and effectually intercept mercy from God. It is not our sin, but our disbelief of the Saviour's sufficiency, and refusal to lay our sins at his feet, that ruins us. "Believe and thou shalt be saved," is addressed by the Saviour to every creature that hears it. If we be not saved it is because we will not. But the best evidence that Christ loves us is the simple experience that we love him. The inner is the proof of the outer,—the print is the evidence of the original painting. The true way to know if I am in God's secret book that is in heaven, is to read my heart and conscience in the light of God's revealed book that is on earth. Do I wish to know if God has elected me before the foundation of the world? it is very easy to answer. To determine whether I am an elect child or not, is not at all a difficult question: it may be determined by asking another; Have I elected God to be my Father, Christ to be my Saviour, the Holy Spirit to be my Sanctifier; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be my portion for ever? If you have elected him, it is absolutely certain that he has elected you;

for the evidence of his election of you is your election of him. The first is the original, the second is the echo; the first the impulse or attraction, the second the response to that attraction. As surely as the shadow indicates the existence of the substance—as surely as the echo indicates the existence of the prior sound, so surely your personal choice or election of Christ indicates his election of you. Or, to vary the words but not the meaning, if you love him, it is absolutely certain that he loves you; or, to use the language of Scripture, “we love him” for this reason, and for no other reason upon earth, “because he first loved us.” Our love to him is the response that we render to his prior love to us, poured into our hearts. No man ever loved the Saviour who was not loved by the Saviour. Therefore it is not difficult to determine whether you are loved by the Saviour. First determine this simple fact, whether you love him. But, you ask, How shall I determine it? Let me enumerate, not enlarge on, the criteria by which you may determine whether you love Christ. If you love him, you will often think of him. You have spent six days since Sabbath last; on what days, and how often, did any thought flit across your minds, about the preciousness of the blood, the excellency of the salvation of Christ? How often did you think of God, the Saviour, the soul, eternity, during last week? Depend upon it, my dear friends, that which has the deepest hold of our hearts, we shall dream of by night, and we shall think of by day: and if the thought of God, a Saviour, eternity, never comes across your minds in the midst of your shops, your warehouses, your walks, in the bye-paths of private, and in the high-ways of public life, it should make you search and see if you are losing or loving Christ. Does the miser fail to think of his wealth? or the mother, of her babe in her bosom? Does a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Then will he who feels that he is the subject of so stupendous, so sovereign, so unchangeable a love—a love that snatched him as a brand from the burning, and that offers to plant him as a tree in the paradise of God, forget it. Is it possible that we can believe such a fact, and be the subjects of such a love, and yet that no thought of it should ever flit or flash across our minds amid the stir and the bustle of the discharge of this world’s duties? Our Christianity

is not what we feel when we sit in the pews, and screw, as it were, every thought and feeling into a sabbath-day propriety, or into a sabbath-day attitude, and make ourselves look Christians at least; but the evidences of our Christian love are those random and accidental thoughts that rise at intervals spontaneously from the depths of the soul, and indicate the fervour of the elements that are within, by their brilliancy, their power, and frequency in all our walks and ways in the world.

Do you, then, I ask again, ever think of Christ? Does the thought of his love ever cross your minds amid the turmoil and the agitation of the world? Surely, surely, bad as we are—many and severe as the world's cares may be,—and I know some of you say, when I speak of the cares, the troubles, and the anxieties of business, Ah! little does he know what they are! I believe they are bitter and oppressive beyond measure; I feel that if I were subject to them as you are, I should sink under them,—but still, if you believe your Bibles, surely one gleam of what the Bible is so eloquent on, will flash upon the ledger and make you feel that amid all your toil and drudgery, there is retained and beating within you the strong sense of a glorious freedom and a happy home in store for you, which will be sweeter because the week-day's toils have been so sore, and the working day's burden so heavy.

If you love Christ, you will not only think of him and of his love, but you will also speak of him. Now tell me, fathers in this assembly, do you ever tell your children that there is a Saviour? Do you ever call your firstborn to your knee, and say, My child, there is a Saviour that loved you, and bids you welcome to his bosom, and tells us to “suffer you to come to him, and forbid you not, for of such as you is the kingdom of heaven.” Husbands, do you ever speak thus to your wives? It is a strange thing that a husband will speak to his wife, or a father to his children, about a thousand topics; but both fail to muster courage to speak to each other about God, the soul, a Saviour, eternity. How is it that man can be eloquent about trivial matters; dumb about glorious and ennobling truths? Depend upon it, if there be a burning heart, there will surely be eloquent lips. If we fear the Lord like those that are spoken of by the prophet,

“we shall” speak often one to another, and the Lord’s book of remembrance will record that we have done so in that day.

In the next place, if we love Christ we shall act and live corresponding to that love. What are those proofs of love that I recapitulated this morning,—“I was in prison, and ye visited me: I was sick, and ye came unto me: I was naked, and ye clothed me?” These were so precious because their tone, their colouring, their fragrance, all come from love to the Saviour. If we love the Saviour, then we shall show that love by what we seek, by what we do, by what we give. Now did you ever say, as you put your sovereign or your five pound note, or your ten pound note into the plate, I give this, because Christ loved me and gave himself for me; I give this as the evidence of the existence within me of a love to him that prompts me to give to his cause what he has given me, for his blessed name’s sake? But after all, take that bank note, that sovereign, and read it again; if the eye of sense cannot read as it could once, beautifully and thankfully read, “*Dei Gratiâ*,” “by the grace of God,” the eye of faith can read upon all our coins, the image and the superscription of Christ. All we have is his—all we possess is from him; and if we love him we shall consecrate at least a portion of it to his service and glory. You recollect the question was put to Peter, “Lovest thou me?” Then what would be the evidence of it? “Feed my sheep,” “Feed my lambs.” “Preach the Gospel to my people; teach the Gospel to children.” I believe there is not a more self-sacrificing office in London than that of a Sunday-School teacher. Our Lord himself says, that feeding his lambs is one of the great proofs of love to him; and when I think that the young men in this metropolis are toiling from early in the morning till midnight, every day, and what a sacrifice I am asking them to make, though love may make it light, when I ask them to occupy the intervals of the Sabbath in teaching in the school, I can scarcely find it in my heart to ask them to become teachers. It is asking them to be, in their degree, martyrs, and to undergo in its measure a sort of martyrdom. When I see young men who are so toiling during the week, ready to make the moral self-sacrifice of occupying the interval in the morning and evening with teaching in our schools, I bless God for it; and I see in such

self-sacrifice the evidence of love earnest and true behind it. If there be a pulse in the wrist, you may be sure there is a heart behind it; if there be a tangible and practical expression of devotedness to the Saviour, you may be sure there is a heart of love behind it; and I cannot conceive that a Sunday-School teacher can so devote himself to a work, often thankless and unsatisfactory, often ill-requited, and necessarily unrewarded in this world, from any other motive than love. If you love the Saviour, you will often think of him; and so the meanest act of service will be covered with a portion of the glory of the Master, and will be dignified by the recollection of the truth that it is for his sake.

In the next place, if we love Christ we shall love all that are like Christ. It is a law that the brothers and sisters of the same family love each other; and it is a law no less universal, that the brothers and sisters of the same Christian family love each other. I know it is a very easy thing for the churchman to love the churchman, and for the dissenter to love the dissenter: an earthly love can manage this; but the difficult or at least the dutiful thing is for the dissenter to love the churchman in spite of his churchmanship, and for the churchman to love the dissenter in spite of his dissent. Love, nevertheless, will penetrate the exterior circumstance which conceals it, and fasten upon the inner loveliness which is the transcript of the likeness, and the outline, though dim, of the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have often wondered what after all, if we are Christians, shall we think of all our quarrels and disputes, acrimony and bitterness, strong language, bad temper, and evil passions excited about church and state, about conformity and dissent, about presbytery and episcopacy, when we meet in heaven, where there are neither churchmen, nor dissenters, nor episcopalians, nor presbyterians, but only Christians. How shall we then look back, and if we look back, with what regret and amazement shall we do so, on those disputes and quarrels and enmities which have rent and disturbed the visible Church, and hindered the spread of the glorious Gospel for which the visible Church was instituted! If Christ has loved us, and we love Christ, we shall increasingly love all

true Christians, and be ready, in spite of all minor points of difference, to do them all the good we can.

Such are a few of the proofs of love to Christ. Try yourselves by them. Do you thus love Christ? do you thus think of him? do you thus look to him? do you thus speak of him? do you thus love his people? and lastly, let me add, can you sacrifice for him? If two persons are walking in the same direction, and a servant in livery follows them, you do not know whether of the two is his master so long as they both keep the same road: but the road diverges; one of the masters goes to the right, and the other to the left; you then ascertain whose servant he is by his following his own master. Now as long as our worldly profit and our Christian principles flow in the same channel, which, blessed be God, they often do and may do, it is very difficult to determine whose we are: but when the turning comes—when the crisis arrives, at which we must surrender the world and follow Christ, or surrender Christ and follow the world, then it will be seen, and we too shall feel whom we love, and whose we are, and with whom we expect to be reckoned. Can you, therefore, give up all for Christ's sake? I trust you have the feeling that would dictate such surrender and sacrifice; and when the crisis demands such sacrifice, you are prepared, I doubt not, to make it.

Thus, I have shown you what are the characteristics of Christ's love to us, and our love to him. It now remains for each one to ask himself, Do I love Christ? and if he can say, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee," then it is plain that Christ loves him.

LECTURE XXXI.

DIVINE CHASTISEMENT.

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”—Rev. iii. 19.

IN my last lecture, I showed that God's love to us is everlasting: man's love is the creation of an hour, and in an hour it evaporates and dies. God's love is not a passion that suddenly springs up and overflows like a mountain stream, and is then dried up; but an everlasting principle that began in the depths of an eternity past, and will rise and flow till like a mighty ocean it covers all in eternity to come. “I have loved thee with an *everlasting* love.” I stated next, that God's love to us is sovereign. We love the creature, because in that creature there is something that provokes, excites, creates our love. But when God loved us, he could see nothing in us worthy of that love or calculated to excite it in him or concentrate it upon us. In other words, he loved us, not because we were beautiful, but to make us so; not because we were worthy, but to make us worthy. Our love is the creature's love, created by something external to it: God's love is the Creator's love, lighting upon an object that is unworthy of it; but not leaving that object till it is transformed by its presence, and made beautiful and worthy of its tenantry.

I also showed you that men's disputes about the doctrine of election, wherever those men are true Christians, are very frequently logomachies, *i. e.* battles about words. You will meet with one who says, “God hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy;” and I am one that believes it; and believes it to be as I plainly indicated in the Bible as almost any truth in it. But you will find others, who say that God did not love us thus from eternity; that he

only called us in time; and that election is not a scriptural doctrine. I ask of such a person, "Do you believe that God loves me before I love him? in other words, that my love to him is only the echo of his love to me? Do you believe that his love is the original, mine the copy? that his is the first sound, mine the echo? that God calls before I hear? that he touches me before I respond? that he draws before I follow?" He replies, "Certainly; if I did not admit all this, I should not admit the doctrines of grace." Then our dispute about election is a mere dispute about words. It matters not whether God determined to save me millions of millennia ago, or whether God was pleased to think of me for the first time a few hours ago, and in his sovereignty to call me to his kingdom. It is equally a call, not dependent upon anything in me, but on the sovereignty and unmerited love of that God who loved me in spite of me. The truth is, that with God this past, this present, this future is nothing. Men talk of the past, the present, and the future; all this is the imperfect human speech trying to embody and to define the infinite and the inexpressible eternal things. With God there is no past, nor present, nor future, but all an open, unlimited, transparent *now*. The past of eternity and the future of eternity are with God equally present to him, just as the word that now escapes from my lips is present to your ear, and the ray that shines from my face lights upon the retina of your eye. There is no past with God; there is with him no future; and what we call time is just a little parenthesis in the bosom of eternity—a portion of the eternal current—cut off by an ever-flowing and imaginary line which we baptize by the name of time, just because we have only this human word to express an idea which is only luminous and real to that God to whom all things are naked, and by whom all things are understood.

God loved us then from everlasting; he loved us in his sovereignty; and he loved us, as I told you, so truly, that, as the expression of that love, he gave Christ to die for us. Many Christians, as I have often observed, many true Christians, have a most imperfect and unscriptural idea of God's love. They seem to think that God hated us, and watched to destroy us, when Christ stepped in, died upon the cross, and, in consequence of this, God

is forced to pardon them whom he would otherwise destroy ; and so now loves them whom before he hated. Such a notion would imply that God is changeable ; that God's feelings can be compelled by something external to God ; which is altogether absurd and unscriptural. So far from God's love being created by Christ's death, it is all the reverse. Christ's death was not the cause of God's love, but the fruit of it ; not the creation of a love that was not, but the exponent of a love that was previously in existence. And Christ's death and sacrifice were required, not to make God love us, but, among other relations, to be the channel and the outlet for the coming forth of that infinite, illimitable and boundless love which needed but a channel for its outlet, that should glorify justice, holiness, and truth.

Having noticed God's love and its characteristics, I endeavoured to show you that the best evidence of God's outer love to us, is our inner consciousness of love to him. No man can open God's secret book and decipher it ; no leaf of that mysterious record was ever scattered by sibyl, prophet or apostle, and given to man to read, to translate, or copy. But we have in our hearts what is just as good, the evidence that we love him, or the evidence that we love him not ; and if we are conscious that we love him, then this love in our hearts is the evidence that he loves us ; for, says the apostle, " We love him because he first loved us." Does any man ask me, therefore, Am I elected of God ? I answer, It is easy to settle this : have you elected him to be your God ? then doubt not that he has elected you. If you ask, Does God love me ? it is easy to answer that : Do you love him ? then doubt not that he has loved you with an everlasting love. But you say, How shall I know that I love him ? I answer, Less by the fervour of the passion that you feel, and more by the fixity of the principle that sustains and guides you through life. Love to God is not an overwhelming passion that carries us almost to fanaticism ; but is a sustaining and abiding principle that becomes deepest where it is most required, and that is felt to be strongest when the emergency occurs that needs most its expression. For instance : I speak to affectionate sons in this assembly—Is there a son in this assembly in whose bosom is the image of a mother the holiest thing upon earth ? and in whose heart there glows

that most fair and beautiful of all holy affections—affection to a mother? That son does not always carry about a conscious feeling and sense of affection to his mother as a passion constantly boiling within him, and overpowering all his thoughts, feelings, and views; but let any dishonour be offered to that mother—let her name be evil spoken of—let her be placed in any danger—let her interests be in jeopardy, and then the passion that lay nestling in the secret nooks and depths of the heart, breaks forth in all its fulness and strength, and proves by deeds how deep, though latent, was the affection that son bore to his mother. It is so with love to God; it is rather a principle, than a passion; it shows itself when the emergency requires it; but then it shows itself to be strong and unconquerable.

But I proceed to the remainder of this verse: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” This certainly seems to us, at first blush, very strange treatment. We should have supposed that when Christ was showing to us his love, he would have said, “As many as I love, I make rich, I make great, and noble, illustrious, renowned; I give them all that this world has to bestow; and I show that I love them by thus wreathing their brows with honours that do not fade, and by filling their coffers with riches that thieves do not steal.” But he does not say so; the natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten;” that is foolishness to the natural man; but to the Christian who is taught by the Spirit of God, it is the best and most precious wisdom.

The whole history of the church is a running comment upon this text. From Abel, who died a martyr amid the wrecks and within the sight of paradise lost, downward to the last sufferer in the South Sea Isles, we have living, lasting, historical comments upon the words, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” Look into the catacombs of Rome in ancient days—visit the crypts of cathedrals, the dens of the inquisition, the dungeons of prisons, and you will find by the inscriptions they have left behind, such as those I read to you, when I told you of the recent disclosures at the Inquisition of Rome, that Christ’s ministers have very often been martyrs. Persecution and proscription have been the heirlooms of Christianity, and the

Miserere of the sufferer has been long the voice of the Christian. Read such chapters as Hebrews xi. where you are told, "They"—*i. e.* those that Christ loved—"were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy :) they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." "Jacob have I loved; Esau have I hated;" yet Esau was the prosperous man, Jacob afflicted. Joseph did God love; and yet Joseph did God visit. Lazarus did God love, and Dives did God cast off; and yet Dives was clothed with purple and fared sumptuously every day; and poor Lazarus was mingled with the dogs, and was glad of the crumbs that fell from the rich one's table.

The man in this assembly who can say that his past life has been sunshine, that his past path has bloomed with flowers, that all has shone brightly, that all dispensations have fallen propitiously on him, has most reason to suspect how it stands between him and God. But, on the other hand, that man whose whole life has been a struggle—whose history has been conflict with trial, and whom all God's waves have seemed to roll over, may not indeed be a Christian; but there is in his experience a stronger ground for presumption that he belongs to the Lord Jesus; for it is one mark at least of the people of God, "Those whom I love, I chasten."

But not only have we a commentary on this text in the facts of past history, but we have it also in the declarations of our Lord himself. After the apostle has given a catalogue of those who have thus suffered, in Hebrews xi., he gives the commentary on this catalogue in chap. xii. "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him;" and here is the text expressed in other words, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "If ye endure chastening," then, what is the argument of the world? "God has cast you off." And sometimes the suspicion of our weak hearts is the same; but, "if ye endure chastening," the argument of inspiration is, "God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth

not?" But, to illustrate the sentiment I have already stated, he adds, "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards — ye are not true sons," — ye are mere professors. "Furthermore we had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; . . . they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure;" many a father chastening his son, not in order to correct that son's misdoing, but, what is the greatest ruin to that son, expressing his own wrath, impetuous passion, rage, and excitement. "They after their own pleasure," — to gratify often their own passion, — "but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now," says the apostle, "no chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; howbeit afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." Now, in all the afflictions we experience, let us recollect this blessed truth, that the chastisement of God is not the punishment of a sovereign inflicted on his guilty subjects, in the exercise of his sovereignty, but the chastisement of a father inflicted upon his children in the exercise of paternal love. I explained to you this morning, when I preached to you upon the text, "Our Father, deliver us from evil," that this is the cry of God's children; and when they ask him "to deliver them from evil," he sends these chastisements upon them, as we are told in the Epistle to the Corinthians, "we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." The first end that God has in view in chastening those whom he loves is, their benefit and good. "It is good for me," says the Psalmist, "that I have been afflicted." Did you ever hear any one who said at the close of his affliction, "It was a curse to me that I was so afflicted?" Even men who are not Christians will admit, that, if it had not been for that blow, they had not risen to their present position; if it had not been for that severe dispensation, they had not arrived at their present prosperity; and what the world says faintly, Christians say fully, "No tribulation for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; but afterward it worketh out the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Old Bishop Hall said very truly, "I have learned more of God, and of myself, by one week's suffering than by all the prosperity of a long lifetime."

A second end that God has in view in chastening those whom he loves is, to wean us from this present world. We are apt to love this world to excess; and not only so, but when it smiles upon us to be so charmed with its syren smile, as to give utterance to the expression, "This is our rest, and here will we dwell." I do not mean by being "weaned from the world," that God's chastisements should draw us from admiring the beautiful sky—from being charmed with those stars, that, like the eyes of omniscience, shine upon us—from loving those flowers that are the smiles of God, the stars of the earth—or from applauding and delighting in exploring the wisdom, the goodness, and the beneficence of God that pervade all nature and overflow all creation: but what I mean by the world is, that bundle of lusts and passions, of desires, and preferences, and sympathies, which the apostle unfolds and enumerates, when he says, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." From the excessive love of what is beautiful, and innocent, and holy, and happy in the world, these chastisements are also intended to wean us; for it is possible not only to love what is forbidden, and thus sin, but to love to excess that which is allowed, and thus no less to sin. Therefore God chastens those whom he loves; he embitters to the Christian the pleasures of the world; he dims the sheen of things seen, or so changes his mind and heart, that he sees them in another light. Every affliction that befalls a Christian cries to him, "This is not your rest; arise, let us go hence." Every sorrow speaks to him, "This is not your rest;" it is blighted. The tears of the weeper wash the eye, and enable it to see more clearly the things that are beyond the horizon—that are unseen and eternal.

A third design that our blessed Lord has in chastening those that he loves, is to lead them nearer to himself. We find even the true Christian idolizing some beautiful and beloved object. The reason why the babe is often snatched from the mother's bosom is, that that mother fixed on her child the affection that she owed to the God that gave it; the reason why the wealth evaporates from your coffers, or takes unexpected wings and flies away, or comes under the grasp of the robber, is, that you put that wealth in the room of the God who enabled you to earn it.

God loves you so much that he will not allow you to glue and rivet your affections to things that are perishing, lest when the world perishes, the worshipper of the world should perish with it. If, therefore, you are the children of God, he will not suffer you to ruin your soul, by loving, and linking that soul to something that occupies the place and absorbs the affections that are due to God alone; and hence, in the experience of such, the loss of earth is the gain of heaven; the sickness of the body is the salvation of the soul; the destruction of the estate is the introduction to the inheritance in glory, and the breaking up of all that you loved, and all that was beautiful about you, is only the scattering of the screens and the rending of the veil that kept your eye from seeing Him who loves you, and therefore thus rebukes and thus chastens you.

Another object that our Lord has in view in chastening those that he loves is, to mortify what is evil in them, to nourish, sustain, and reveal what is holy and good within them. We find that there was no saint or apostle in the New Testament who was not flawed. There is not one vessel that the potter has made and placed in his temple upon earth that is not more or less cracked. Why is it that the most illustrious characters in the bright catalogue of the saints of God have all some great flaw, or were stained by some dark fault? Because the worship of saints is not an exclusively Roman Catholic dogma,—it is in human nature. What is Carlyle's hero worship, but human nature trying to worship the intellect, or self-reliance—just as the Roman Catholic worships his saint? If we saw David without a fault—Paul without his persecution—Peter without his denial, we should begin to worship David, and Paul, and Peter, and give to the created man the honour that is due to the uncreated and eternal God. Hence we find that when God afflicted these men, and placed them in circumstances of trial, he brought out the inherent corruption that was within them. Therefore we read of the impatience of Moses—the unbelief of Abraham—the self-satisfaction of Hezekiah—the idolatry of Solomon—the disobedience of Jonah—the denial of Peter; teaching us that these men were but creatures—poor, frail, feeble creatures—sinners by nature, though saints by grace; and that whatever excellency was in them was

borrowed, and they needed to look for and pray for fresh aid to that excellence every day, lest they should disgrace that holy name by which they were called. But when God afflicted, and tried, and chastened them, then we read of the meekness of Moses—of the patience of Job—of the repentance of David—of the penitence of Peter—of the zeal and faithfulness and preaching of Paul; so that the storm which smote those trees, stripped them of their foliage, laid their branches bare to the biting winds and the nipping frosts, but yet left them, in the winter of their being, only to strike their roots more deeply, to husband more their vital strength; and thus, next summer, to put out a more glorious foliage, and to bear more abundant fruit, to the honour and the praise of Him who made them and planted them.

In the next place Christ chastens and rebukes those whom he loves, in order to make the future glory more welcome. Have you never noticed in the most exquisite paintings a very dark background? Why so? To make the main picture appear more beautiful, sharp, and prominent. Did you never hear in the noblest strains of music, discords thrown in? Why? That by the momentary jar the following harmony may sound more sweet and glorious. So God is making this world, to many of his people, more bitter, in order that the world into which they are soon to enter and live for ever, may be felt more beautiful, happy, and welcome. It is the stormy and tempestuous sea that makes the haven more delightful to the mariner; it is the nettles and the thorns of this world that will make so beautiful and fragrant the amaranthine flowers of that world that is to be. It is the poor and ragged garment and the bitter bread of this present pilgrimage that will make that future heaven so fair and glorious. It is the weary traveller that rests most sweetly when his journey is over; it is the child that has cried most bitterly that sleeps most sweetly after weeping; it is the Christian who has suffered most on earth who will most enjoy "the rest that remaineth for the people of God." So true is it that those "whom he loves, he rebukes and chastens."

There is another great truth that Christ's chastening teaches us, that he himself is the author of it all. We are very apt to

conclude that our chastening, or afflictions, or distresses, whatever they may be, come from second causes. I have been trying to explain to you the sentiments of some of those men who attribute every thing to natural laws—to fate—to destiny—to concomitancy of circumstances. No man has less to fear from these things than the Christian; no book is less likely to be seathed by them than the Bible. All experience, growing, accumulating experience, attests the truth of this. But when a Christian suffers—let it be from plague, from pestilence, from famine—let it be from sword or battle—let it be from sudden death—let it be from the east or from the west, from the north or from the south—let the plague be accounted for by the excessive heat, or the excessive cold (and so contradictory are our philosophers that they have accounted for it on both principles)—let it be accounted for by the absence or by the presence of electricity in the air—let us subscribe to the fungus theory, or to the theory that contradicts it and laughs it to scorn—we must at last come to the conclusion to which God grant that all statesmen and rulers may speedily come—to which Christians long ago came, and to which the world itself is coming—for the very last newspaper I read says respecting our recent judgment, “All is mystery; all solutions of it are empiricism;”—but to us there is but one God and one Mediator; he sent the pestilence to punish the guilty and chasten his own, and his people pronounced of it, “The cup that our Father has given us, shall we not drink it?” “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” “In him we live, and move, and have our being;” and whether there be laws, or whether there be second causes, or not, of this we are sure, that the second cause is just the manifestation of God’s energy. And strange it is, that just because God works, as God might be expected to work, so harmoniously, so consistently—not, like man, by fits and starts, changing his plans and his purposes every day, but keeping continuously all creation moving in order and harmony—we foolishly argue that he has let the world alone, and left it to itself; and thus we supersede God by second causes, and make the experiment, the absurd experiment, of working the world without God, which is just as wise as to attempt to work a steam-engine without steam,

or to sail a ship without wind, or to have an effect without a cause.

It is thus, that when he chastens us, it is to lead us to himself: and when he teaches us by the contradictions and inconsistencies of man, that it is the finger of God—then the dispensation has done its work, and we learn that not fate, not accident, not anything fortuitous; nor this theory nor that, but God himself sent it; and that on our humbling ourselves, and giving expression to our penitential prayers, feelings, convictions, sorrow, God heard us, and sent it away.

Let us notice, in the next place, that in all these afflictions which Christ sends, there is nothing penal. Mark this; so long as a man remains a stranger to the Gospel, so long he has no reason for thinking that his afflictions are otherwise than penal; but when a man becomes a true Christian, then he has reason to believe that his afflictions are paternal. We are not to argue from the affliction to what God is; but we are to argue from what God is to what the affliction is. We are not to say, "The affliction is bitter, and therefore God is a wrathful being;" but we are to argue—"God is our Father, and therefore this affliction is paternal, and sent to us in love." All our trials are paternal; all our afflictions are the exponents of love. "Whom the Lord loves he chastens," is the tree cast into the bitterest streams, that will make all those streams to be presently and permanently sweet.

Let me notice, as another lesson, that we are taught by these afflictions, when Christ rebukes, afflicts, and chastens those whom he loves, we should feel under them a deeper sense of the preciousness of the Gospel of Christ. It is in that deep desolation, when we feel that most bitter of all feelings which is expressed in the word "alone;" when we feel that all have forsaken us, and that there is no man to help us—it is in such an hour and in such desolation that the words "It is I" sound in our ears the most musical we ever heard; and the thought, "Whom I love, I thus chasten," becomes to us a fountain of comfort, exhaustless as the God that filled it. It is the heart that is broken that contains the greatest quantity of the living waters of the Gospel: it is the hand of him that has been most afflicted that grasps the

Bible most heartily. It is the man who has felt all the bitterness of this life's most painful dispensations, who sees a fulness in the consolations, and a preciousness in the truths of the Gospel, such as he never saw and never felt before. It is the Christian who feels, not the stoic who feels not, who comes to know how sweet and how precious and how satisfying is that remedy which is provided for all that mourn in the Gospel of Christ.

One great design of affliction, let me add, is to bring near to you the other world, the future rest that remaineth for the people of God. Is it not your experience, that when you have long been thoughtless, and God, the soul, eternity, have been to you but words without meaning—some father in this assembly loses his first-born; and let me ask that father, What were your feelings when you looked upon the pale face of your child? I think the most painful object upon earth is the pale face of a dead babe, because most terribly eloquent of what sin has done to one who never actually sinned. I say, when you gazed upon the pallid features of the lifeless babe, have not your wealth, your gains, your prospects, your prosperity, everything about you become shaded, tainted, darkened, in the bitterness you felt at the loss of one so near and so dear? That feeling was needed; that deep sense of the uncertainty and insufficiency of all that is about you could not be purchased at a less expense than the loss of the babe that that mother clasped so affectionately, and that father loved so dearly. And thus Christ chastens those that he loves. We walk in this dark and chequered scene in this world, as if we were in the dark and gloomy crypts of some vast cathedral; that glorious cathedral above us is the heavenly and the better land. At times, as we are walking in the dark crypts below, we hear the pealing of the organ—some unspent sounds of the choir that chants perpetually the praises of God, and ever as a brother or a sister or a babe or parent goes up to join that happy and glorious choir in the magnificent cathedral above, some beams of its celestial light come down upon us to tell how beautiful it is, and some of its harmonies light upon our hearts more audibly, to tell us how sweet its exercises are, and we are ready to exclaim, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, that I also might

fly away and be at rest!" absent from the body, that I might there be present with the Lord.

It is also one end of affliction to enable us to preach consolation to others. I believe that few ministers of the Gospel whom I have known, have been able to speak true, heart-reaching comfort to those that mourn. I have not been, in my own biography, comparatively, an afflicted man: and what I speak to you that mourn is more what I trust the Spirit teaches me in his word, than what the Spirit has yet taught me in painful, personal, and bitter experience. What may be before me, I know not; but what is past has been to me abundant reason for gratitude; never, I trust, an occasion for presumption.

There are persons who will speak thus to those who are suffering under the deepest and the bitterest calamity, "Oh, you should not be so sorrowful!" "It is wrong to be thus overwhelmed with grief." That is the most miserable of all comfort. There are times when grief requires an echo — when no consolation we can offer can avail, when the full heart requires a full vent for its feelings, when we must weep with those that weep in, order to comfort; and they are but miserable comforters who have not learnt this. We therefore are often afflicted, and especially ministers of the Gospel, in order that we may be able to sympathise with those that suffer, and thus to comfort others.

And lastly, the Saviour chastens those whom he loves, in order to glorify himself. Sick-beds are often more eloquent than the most brilliant discourses. When the world sees us patient in tribulation; plunged in suffering, and yet exclaiming, in the depths of our agony, "The cup that our Father hath given us to drink, shall we not drink it?" saying, even while we suffer, "Happy is the man whom the Lord chasteneth;" and that our present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed; when the world can thus see joy on a sick-bed — happiness in poverty — contentment in distress — acquiescence in bereavement; then the world will say, "There is something in that Bible which there is not in any book of ours, and something in that Christianity which is not in any philosophy of ours; and the religion that makes men thus triumph over

sick-beds, and pain, and sorrow, and suffering, and even exclaim by the margin of the grave, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" is a religion that man did not make, for man's religion can never touch man's heart—it is from God; and we will go and seek to taste of a cup which the believer has drunk, and has found to be so sweet and so precious, if peradventure we too may find it and drink of it likewise. The Lord bless what I have said, to his glory and to our good! Amen.

LECTURE XXXII.

THE APPEAL OF LOVE.

"Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."
—REV. iii. 20.

WE may love the unseen, but we cannot love the unknown; it is therefore important to determine who it is that thus speaks, "I stand at the door, and knock." You must have noticed, and many, I hope, remember the beautiful, varied, and expressive names by which he who thus speaks is represented. He is spoken of in the very introduction of the Apocalypse as "He that is like unto the Son of Man; clothed with a garment down to the feet; his head and his hairs white as snow, and his eyes as a flame of fire. And when I saw him," says the Seer, "I fell at his feet as dead." It is this divine personage then—he that bowed the heavens to open our graves—who came from the throne, and suffered on the accursed tree—who is love, and by whom alone God's love can light upon us—who speaks not to the bishop of Laodicea alone, but unto every minister in Christendom—unto you or me, and each one of us, with as distinct an emphasis as if that one man were the only being in the universe—"I stand at the door of thy heart and knock: if any man will open, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." The door that is here alluded to is the door of access to the human heart; the home to which he seeks admission is the temple that he originally built so glorious for himself, but over which there hath passed so deep, so terrible an eclipse. Certainly in the applicant who claims, nay, who does not claim it as his right, but who asks

as a favour admission to the house ; and the house to which he seeks admission, there is the greatest possible contrast. The one, the applicant, is all glory, beauty, excellence, perfection, blessing ; the other, the human heart, that house that was once built of jewels, made so beautiful and resplendent, with a light so glorious — is now a wreck ; poisonous weeds are growing about it ; all venomous reptiles crawl and breed in its defaced and darkened chambers, and all evil spirits hold in it their foul and continuous festival, though from its surviving holy spots there leap forth at intervals, those live sparks that reveal what the glory once was, and what the desolation now is, and give earnest of what the beauty shall be when the Creator who formed it shall rebuild and rebeautify it, and make it his own home again for ever.

But in looking at such a house, and acquiescing in the description of it which I have given, and in noticing such an applicant, it may be asked, — Why should he approach it ? why should he knock and ask for admission ? It cannot be because we have invited him ; we never asked him to do so. The Church at whose minister's heart, and at whose people's heart, he asks for admission, repeated the language and gloried in the features which we repeat and glory in, " We are rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing ;" and little knew, what we know not as we ought to know, that we are poor and blind and naked, glorying in our shame, and having nothing good that we can call our own. It is not true, then, that we have invited him. When he came to his own, his own received him not. It was written upon his life — an inscription only equivalent in the depth of the wickedness it revealed, to that which was read upon his cross — " He was despised and rejected of men." We asked him not ; why, then, does he come to our hearts, and ask for admission ? It cannot be to augment his own happiness ; it cannot be to add to the praises that are continually hymned before him ; for where he is, in the unutterable glory, " the glorious company of the apostles praise him ; the goodly fellowship of the prophets praise him ; the noble army of martyrs praise him ;" his Church redeemed from every land and people and tongue continually praise him. It cannot be, then, that it will exalt him, that our faint notes should be needed to mingle with the hallelujahs of the blessed,

or that our presence in glory is requisite to make that glorious One more glorious than he is. If he had expunged the earth from the number of the orbs of creation when that earth fell, or if he had done what it deserved, made this earth one vast grave, and Adam and Eve its first, its last, its twin occupants; if each wind that rushed over it had sung a perpetual miserere, and the curse it provoked had wrapped it as a dark and terrible shroud for ever, heaven would not have wanted inhabitants, nor would God have been without praise, nor would Christ have been less happy in himself: why, then, does he thus appeal to our hearts, and knock at the door of our minds, and ask admission to our bosoms. There are angels that fell from a greater height still and are plunged into more terrible woe; and yet he speaks not thus to them. The only answer is, he knocks at the door of each heart in the exercise of that sovereign love in which he came to the cross and died for us. He comes first to us; he does not wait till we go to him: it is the grand characteristic of the Gospel, that the first movement downward is on God's part, before there can be a responsive movement upward on our part. If Christ were to wait till we spontaneously made application to him, he would wait for ever. But his love is too great for that; call it election, call it predestination, call it sovereignty, call it grace, call it by whatever name you like best, the fact is, that he draws us before we follow, that he teaches us before we respond to him, that he speaks to us in his love, and our love is but the echo of the love that is in him, the great original.

It is the law of the creature's being, that the creature can only love where there is something previously beautiful, or attractive, to draw out and fix that love; but when God loves, he loves where there is nothing beautiful, holy, or happy, in order to make holy, beautiful, and happy the object of his love. We love as creatures, our love being a created love—created by something external to us; he loves as God, his love being an uncreated, a sovereign love, making that on which it lights, holy, beautiful, and happy.

But, let us ask again, in looking at this most touching and interesting appeal of heaven to earth, of Christ to humanity, what can be his object in thus standing and knocking at the door of

the human heart? That object, interpreted by our sin, we should suppose to be, to spy out all the dark nooks of the human heart; to judge of the length and the breadth of its sin; to measure the extent of its alienation and its estrangement from God: and having seen how dark, how guilty it is—and I believe that the most awful spectacle upon earth would be a naked, unvarnished, unconverted human heart—we might suppose then, that our Lord's object in his coming into it is to see all, and trace all, and notice all its guilt, and then to destroy or punish with eternal misery the unhappy one that has such a heart. But it is not so. Interpreted by his love, his errand is a very different one. He asks admission into the heart, not as the righteous judge to condemn it, but as the merciful Saviour to forgive it; he does not demand possession as a king, and crush where there is no conversion, but he begs and prays for admission as a suppliant, to save, to convert, and not to destroy. He desires, not to destroy our wills, but to bow them and make them willing; not to punish, but to pardon; and he shows in thus waiting at the door and knocking, the counterpart, or rather the original, of that noble feature in this, with all its faults and shortcomings, noble land of ours, that the Queen of England, beloved and popular as she is, dare not enter the poorest peasant's hut, or the poorest mechanic's lodging, without the permission of that peasant, or the acquiescence of that mechanic. It seems that the Lord of glory has such reverence for the house that he built, and so estimates the aboriginal dignity of man's soul, the tenant of that house, that he will not force an entrance, as omnipotence could do, but will wait and pray for an entrance, making us willing, never doing violence to the will of his rational offspring. "I stand at the door, and knock."

This leads me, in the next place, to notice, what his position is—"standing at the door, and knocking." I need not say that the language is figurative: but all figure has an original type of which it is the delineation. The substance is set in the imagery. The idea taught us is that Christ is not satisfied to send an angel to prepare his way; nor is he satisfied with sending a summons from the skies: he comes down and stands, and personally knocks at each heart, and himself begs for admission into it—to do what?

to make it happy. But such is his reverence for the fallen and discrowned king man,—the soul—the tenant of this house, that he will not force an entrance by the exercise of mere power, but will conquer by the omnipotence of love, by the brightness of truth, by the persistency of patience, by the reiterated knocks that appeal to that heart which he made, and which he has come to redeem. What a distance has Christ come! what a descent is there in his interposition for us! And does not this teach us that great truth which the affection of mothers and of children has illustrated and unfolded to us in the world's past history, that there is no depth so deep that the feet of love will not wade through it—there is no gulf so broad that the wings of love will not span it? There is no estrangement in the fallen creature so desperate, so fearful, on this side the very lintel of hell, that Christ will not come and snatch from destruction even the brand that was touched by the first flames of the everlasting burning. We have this very feature of our blessed Lord, shortly and simply described in the text, by another pen, but writing under the same inspiration; in the Song of Solomon, v. 2, where the Church says, "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh." I may just say, while reading this, I am not one of those who have so improved in modern philosophy as to believe that this book is not inspired. I regret greatly that an able dissenting minister, Dr. Pye Smith, in one of his works has come to such a conclusion. I think he is utterly wrong, demonstrably wrong, and that he has adopted a principle which, if proved, we must, of course admit; but the admission of which, if it cannot be proved, I am prepared to show would sweep the whole word of God from our possession altogether. Either the Old Testament is true as a whole, or it is not true at all. Now I believe this book to be a description of the affection which exists between Christ and his Church, the former being called the husband of his Church, and the latter, his redeemed company, the company of his own elect, being denominated the bride of the Lamb. The language contained in it, and the figures employed in its illustration, are perfectly pure to him that is pure,—and only to the impure can they appear otherwise. For is there anything purer, holier, than domestic affection? Is there anything

brighter, better, more sacred, than the domestic hearth? The cope of heaven covers not a holier fact. Is there any affection deeper, intenser, purer than that for which a man shall leave even his mother, to whom the tie is strongest, tenderest, dearest? This is the affection which is used in this beautiful song to describe Christ's love to his own.

But to return to my subject. The bride is represented as addressing the bridegroom, saying, "I sleep, but my heart waketh : it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying," ("I stand at the door and knock,") "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled : for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." Thus representing our Lord as standing all night, the dark, weary, dismal, wintry, stormy night, at the door, asking for admission, and, in innumerable instances, the response being, I will not.

Having seen what our Lord's position is, let us now inquire, What is our position? His position is, "I stand at the door, and knock:" and he adds, "*if* any man will open," which shows that all men do not open, "I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." How strange it is that man should not at once open his heart, and give instant and hearty welcome to such an applicant! But does man open his heart to any other applicants? Not knowing whom I address, or how many thoughtless, ungodly, unconverted ones may be before me, I ask, do not you yourselves know how often your heart has opened wide its doors to a thousand applicants possessed of all sorts of characters? How often have the lusts of the world trod the lintel of that door! how often has the world swung it on its hinges! Mammon sits upon its threshold, and chants the praises of gold as his morning and his evening song; and all foul fiends cling to its door-posts, resisting the entrance of him that would spoil them, while they welcome, and encourage you to welcome, only those that will co-operate with them. Strange it is then that man should admit the sting that will torment him, the scorpion passions that will lash him; but when the King of glory asks for admission to his heart, he says, "Be so good as to call another day; we are too busy; every bed is occupied; every room is full; we have no room to spare for our Maker and the Redeemer, or for him who

would save us : I have bought a piece of ground, and I have no time to attend to you ; I have married a wife, and I have no time to listen to you ; I have bought five yoke of oxen, I must needs go and prove them : call again, to-morrow perhaps I may hear you ; at present I cannot admit you. I am not at home." He will tell the truth, in the guise of the common lie, "I am not at home." The reason of all this is, the consciousness that if you were to admit the Saviour, he would instantly drive out the money-changers and those that sell doves, and sweep the house of that which makes it a den of thieves. But you do not know that, if he did so, it would not be the desolation that you anticipate ; but that having removed these he would inlay it with holiness — cause it to shine with new glory — fill it with a purer and sweeter atmosphere, and teach it to enjoy new communion with heaven, with happiness and joy for ever and ever. Men continually fall into this great mistake ; they think that if they become religious, they must necessarily become miserable ; because they conceive that religion demands the sacrifice and surrender of the object which they now love,—which is perfectly true ; but they forget that the same religion that takes away the things that they now love, which hurt them and are sinful, substitutes for them better and more precious things, that will give them true and everlasting happiness.

Review the whole of this subject. I have invited you to look at the applicant ; at the house into which he asks to be admitted ; at his position, and at our treatment of him. Now do not say, while I am speaking, This has nothing to do with us ; this which the minister is describing does not concern us ; he is talking about something which occurred in Patmos, or in Palestine, or something that relates to a world beyond the stars ; and not of a subject with which we have anything to do. My dear friends, I fear that the constant feeling of almost every man while he hears the Gospel is, that it is a description of something at a distance from him, and not that each appeal is adding to him new and more terrible responsibility. When Christ says, "I stand at the door, and knock," it is literally true. I wish you to try and hold fast this fact ; I wish and I pray that both myself and you may grasp this stupendous thought, that the Lord of glory is an

applicant for supremacy in every heart that beats in this vast assembly, as strictly and as truly as if that individual and Christ were alone in the universe. My dear brother, young man, let me ask you, have you admitted this applicant? Who is Lord over your conscience? whose law do you obey? for his servants you are. Whose commands do you accept? whose glory do you seek? whose honour is dearest to you? Ask yourselves these questions; let each man ask himself: it is a question involving the most momentous issues. I do not wish to terrify you into the Gospel, because I do not think this is God's process; but I dare not conceal facts. No man knows that he will see to-morrow's sun. We have only escaped from one form of death and disease still to grapple with the old forms in which death ever comes. What an awful thing would it be that a soul should emerge from its ruin to meet Christ upon his throne, and there recollect that he who holds the sceptre of the universe—he who has the key of heaven and of hell, and shuts and no man can open, and opens and no man can shut—is the divine Being whom you rejected when he was an applicant for admission and supremacy within you; and whom you now meet to feel the full meaning of that most awful of all awful expressions—"the wrath of the Lamb!"

My conviction is, that one great cause why conversions are not multiplied, and why a deep flood of feeling does not roll through every heart, and overflow with contagious sympathy whole congregations, is that we have not each vital, personal, vivid conceptions of these things as of things which belong to each, and to each alone; that we forget that the minister is speaking about what concerns me, as if I were the only human being that heard him. We all know that if a very heavy load is to be carried by several men, the weight of the load is so distributed that each man has only a few pounds to carry; so the larger the congregation which the minister addresses, the more they seem to feel that the responsibility he places upon them is thus lightened. But oh! my dear friends, it is not so. Those who have heard this verse read this night will retire from this house of prayer, having made a plunge toward hell, or having unfurled their wings and with energy taken a new and a nobler flight to glory and to

immortality. Neutral you cannot be; a neutral position you cannot occupy; your responsibility is just as inseparable from you as your immortality. This text will meet you again. You may as well try to rid yourselves of your responsibility to God, as to rid yourselves of your association with this truth as an element of happiness, or an element of misery and of woe. My dear friends, let us each try to comprehend this thought, that at this moment the Son of God is just as near to thee and to me, as he ever was to Mount Tabor, to Mount Calvary, or to Gethsemane,—to Mary, to Peter or to John. “Where two or three are met in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” I have not the least doubt that the Son of God hears what I say; and that he hears the faintest pulse of the heart of every hearer that listens to me; and that he sees the shifts which that young man is making, and the evasions which that young woman is attempting, and the clever escape that that old avaricious sinner in that corner has discovered, and how every mind is at this moment making some excuse, and contriving some evasion, to stand between the appeal of the text, and the conscience which it approaches to disturb. You know I speak what is true; you dare not say these statements are false; and yet you dare not accept them as truths, because if you were, you would have to resign your evil practices; and yet if you were to deny these to be truths, your conscience would torment you. You have neither the peace of the believer nor the peace of the world; you occupy the border land; conflict on the north and on the south—never the peace that passeth understanding. May the Spirit of God impress this thought upon each man’s conscience, that Christ is an applicant at that man’s heart for admission, sovereignty, supremacy.

In the first place, Christ knocks for admission by the voice of reason. He uses man’s reason as a means of knocking for admission to the supremacy of the human heart. The Bible has borne the test of the severest analysis; Christianity has stood the most searching and sifting ordeals; and if there be one book upon earth that courts, not dreads, inquiry—if there be one book on earth that comes forth from the furnace brighter and more beautiful, like the gold that has left its oxide only behind it, it is the word of God. More than this; there is not a

young man, however sceptically disposed, in this congregation, who does not in his best moments see and know that it is a reasonable thing to be a Christian. Our passions may say what they will, our companions may gibe as they please, and others may laugh and sneer as they like; but you know that to believe the Gospel is a rational thing; and you know that, after all, to be what the Gospel bids you be, and what God offers to make you, is the most reasonable thing in the whole experience of man. Men, my dear friends, are not first sceptical, and therefore immoral; but they are first immoral, and then they are sceptical. It is the depraved heart that makes the darkened head; it is not, in nine cases out of ten, the darkened head that makes the depraved heart.

In the second place, we may presume, as seems perfectly fair and just, that he appeals to us, and knocks for admission by our affections. He takes our affections into that hand which was nailed to the accursed tree for us, and he says to you, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I died for you; I shed my blood for you; I endured the accursed tree for you; and all I ask as the reward of my travail is your admission of me into your heart; not to make that heart miserable, but to take out the poisoned and the barbed shaft which makes it miserable, and to plant in its place that which will make it unutterably happy and full of joy." One would think that every affection of man's heart would instantly reply, "Come in; most welcome art thou, Prince of Peace; take this heart of mine, and make that heart thine own."

In the third place, Christ knocks, and asks for admission by the conscience. In some it is stupified; in others it is dead: but when conscience is touched by the hand of the Son of God, and made the instrument of knocking at the heart of man, even in the most desperate cases, it speaks in tones of irrepressible and piercing eloquence. In the case of Felix, it spoke in thunder; in the case of Agrippa, in a still, small, subdued voice; in that of Judas, it overwhelmed him with deep and terrible despair. I ask you now, those of you who are not or do not pretend to be what is called purely religious persons,—you who come to the house of God to hear what you call a good sermon—those

who go from church to chapel, and from chapel to church, and from both to cathedral, to hear the last new preacher—those who have no religion—who are churchmen but not spiritual men, dissenters but not Christians, sermon hearers but not sermon feelers; who deal with God's truth as the cold-hearted anatomist deals with the muscles and members of the human body, analyse and criticise without a spark of feeling,—to your consciences I speak, and ask if there are not, in your experience, secret and silent watches of the night—peculiar moods of mind which you cannot well describe—when some mysterious hand seems to turn over the leaves of your past history, and some mysterious lamp sheds its full and intense splendour upon it; and while your conscience looks at those leaves, and reads them in that light, does it not tell you, even while you are stifling it, that you cannot go on in this way—that matters cannot last as they are—that death, judgment, eternity, are rushing upon you, and that you must prepare to meet them; for we see many, many taken, of each of whom it might be said, “Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting;” and how shall you appear before God? Are you not at times overpowered by some such feeling? a sort of melancholy which resembles sorrow only as a mist resembles rain; which makes you feel that something is wrong within you, but you know not what. That moment is the stillness which Christ has created within, that you may listen and hear his knock at the door of your heart: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man will open, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.”

God knocks at the door of our hearts, by and in the preaching of the Gospel. You recollect that beautiful passage in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians which so plainly conveys this idea, to which I may just refer you, where the Apostle says, “We then are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.” When you hear these words, “Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden;” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved;” “Why will ye die?” these all are the appeals of the Gospel—the still small voice. But at other times it speaks to you in different accents, “How shall ye dwell

with the everlasting burnings?" "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness;" "Our God is a consuming fire." These words will be heard by you, either as the crashes of insufferable thunder in the regions of the lost, or as the reverberations of that perpetual and beautiful song in the realms of the blessed for ever.

But Christ knocks at the door of the human heart, and asks for admission by his providential dealings. What was that blow which swept from your possession the near, the beloved, and the dear? What was the loss of so much and so hardly earned property, which was taken from you without a moment's notice? It was Christ knocking at the door of your heart for admission. And when some mother in this assembly watched her babe—that beautiful flower, first transplanted from its native clime into the wintry air—when you have gazed upon it in the agony of its suffering—(and I know not a sight more touching than an infant's suffering, except it be an infant's death)—and when you have seen the dark shadow of approaching death spread itself over its tiny brow—and when you have seen the spirit emerge and leave its shrine, the shrine of your fond idolatry—and when you have followed that spirit to its brighter and its better home, did you not feel as if a part of your own life had departed from you? That was the Son of God knocking at that mother's heart, and seeking admission to supremacy there. And when you, my dear friends, saw lately, as many of you did see, the pestilence sweeping down its thousands around you—when it seemed as if some dark angel spread and flapped his wings above every city in the empire, and those you knew and those you loved were cut down; the more you felt as if his cold breath was touching yourselves, and in the silence and solemnity of your feelings, you all felt about God, about Christ, about judgment, about eternity, as you never felt before—what was it? It was Christ knocking at the door of the nation's heart, seeking, in its palace, in its parliament, in its post-office, sovereignty, supremacy, and obedience to his control. Such dispensations are intended to subdue and melt. Sorrow softens the heart, as the dews soften and saturate the soil; and then, and only then, love, and sympathy, and trust gush forth as showers from summer clouds. The Lord Jesus Christ,

in such dispensations, empties of its idols the heart that he most tenderly loves; and having made it cease to be a Pantheon of gods many and lords many, he consecrates it to be a holy chancel in which is one priest, one sacrifice, one altar, even God who is all and in all.

What was the recent epidemic, I ask, but God the Saviour knocking at Great Britain's heart? and what did each knock say? "I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt have no other gods but me." Thou shalt not support any system which would set up other gods besides me: thou shalt not give of thy national treasury to endow that which displeases me by its adoration of saints and angels and mediators many, and intercessors many. What did another knock say? It said, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy: six days shalt thou labour." And do so where? In the palace, in the parliament, in the post-office, in the warehouses; "for the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;" God has hallowed it; and "in it thou shalt do no manner of work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant," nor the post-office clerk, "nor thine ox, nor thine ass," except in works of necessity or mercy; for these are the only exceptions, and the only limitations, and if either of these can be pleaded, then we admit the propriety of labour, because "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath;" but if there be no necessity and no mercy in it, then it is a deep and deadly sin. I do not believe that our statesmen and governors mean to desecrate the Sabbath: and I understand that a head clerk in the post-office has written to the head of that department, and asked this question, "Am I compelled, in order to retain my situation, to work on the Sabbath day?" The immediate answer was one worthy of the man who gave it, "No, you are not." Now I do think that in all this I see a most beautiful interposition of God. The fact is, if we are true to our duty and our responsibility, this little attempt of a very busy man, occupying a very subordinate place, to commence the desecration of the Sabbath, will be overruled by the providence of God to produce the stoppage of all deliveries on the Sabbath day in every post-office throughout the country, and letting every one have the Sabbath sacred and holy and happy to himself. What a

foolish reason is that which is urged in support of this measure ! Its advocates and supporters say, "The letter comes to London, and is delivered on Sunday morning at the post-office, where it lies, and the London merchant gets his letter on Monday morning at 10 ; but, as no mail starts till Monday morning, the consequence is that the Liverpool merchant cannot get his till Monday night. Thus, they say, the London merchant gets the news of the market twelve hours sooner than the Liverpool merchant." Such an argument would no doubt have told with some men in the House of Commons twenty years ago ; but it will not have the same effect now ; for we have the electric telegraph, which carries a message at the rate of 288,000 miles in one second ; and if this be employed, the Liverpool merchant will not be behind the London merchant by the five thousandth part of a second, if he only uses those means which God in his providence has provided in order perhaps to prevent the desecration of his Sabbath and the transgression of his command.

Thus God knocks at the door of a nation's heart. But let us not forget that he does not therefore cease to knock at the individual heart. The patience with which he waits is no greater wonder than the love which first prompted him. He knocks at your heart and at my heart, in beautiful Sabbaths, in earnest sermons, in all the eddies and windings of private life, in all the cataracts and convulsions of European life ; in our joys, in our hopes, in our anxieties ; in all incidents and accidents ; in all gains and losses ; in all that is little, in all that is great, Christ stands at the door and asks for admission.

I cannot detain you longer to-night, but I will prosecute my reflections on this most important text—important because it discloses so much love in the heart of Jesus, and implies such heavy responsibilities on our part—if spared to another Sabbath evening. May it please him who knocks, that we may each bid him welcome, and give him the heart which he may justly claim. And to his name be the glory. Amen.

Shepherd, that with thy loving sylvan song
Hast broken the slumber which encompass'd me,
Who mad'st thy crook from the accursed tree
On which thy holy arms were stretch'd so long,

Lead me to mercy's ever-flowing fountains;
For thou my shepherd, guard, and guide shalt be,
I will obey thee, and wait to see
Thy feet all beautiful upon the mountains.
Hear, Shepherd! thou who for thy flock art dying,
Oh wash away those scarlet sins, for thou
Rejoicest at the contrite sinner's vow.
Oh wait! to thee my weary soul is crying;
Wait for me! Yet why ask it, when I see,
With feet nail'd to the cross, thou'rt waiting still for me?

LECTURE XXXIII.

COMMUNION.

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”
—REV. iii. 20.

LAST Lord’s-day evening I addressed you from these words. I presented to you, first of all, the place into which Christ would enter—the heart, or conscience, of the individual sinner; once a glorious fane, now a ruin—all foul reptiles creeping in it—all impure weeds luxuriating in it; and only here and there sparks of its original glory bursting forth, to reveal how grand it once was, how fallen it now is. I noticed too, the appeal as well as the position of our Lord—“I stand at the door, and knock.” I commented on the fact that we, on our part, never asked him to come near to us. There is nothing in us to attract him. His position is only to be explained by himself—his sovereignty, his unmerited love. Man courts the creature, because there is something in the creature beautiful, or lovely, and adapted to attract him. God comes in sovereignty to the creature, not because there is in the creature one element of beauty, but in order to create in that creature all the elements of the beautiful, and holy, and happy.

I tried to consider, in the next place, what can be Christ’s object in thus standing at the door and knocking. Interpreted by our sins, we should say, to condemn and to destroy; interpreted by his love, and by facts, it is to bless, to beautify, and to make holy. I have noticed what is our position in regard to Christ’s position: “he stands at the door, and knocks.” The very fact that he stands, and knocks, shows that there is in us

some reluctance to open; we do not open the instant that he applies for admission. How strange is this! Satan is permitted to take possession of our souls; all evil passions cluster about the lintels and the door-posts of that house at which Christ knocks; Mammon presides upon the threshold, and chants the praises of money; and Satan has a passport in and out, when and how he pleases. But the Lord of glory asks for admission, for reasons which I will hereafter specify, and we answer, "Go this time, I will send for you at a more convenient season;" "Call when you pass again: I am too busy to attend to you now;" "I have other things to do; I have bought a yoke of oxen; I have married a wife; I have purchased a farm: I will send for you another time."

I then endeavoured to explain to you the instruments by which Christ may be presumed reasonably, and without forcing the interpretation of the passage, to knock. He appeals by reason: "Come," he says, "let us reason together." The most reasonable thing upon earth is the Gospel; and the next reasonable thing is to accept the Gospel; there is nothing so irrational as scepticism in principle, except it be scepticism in practice; there is nothing so reasonable as the Gospel, as it is unfolded in the Bible, except it be the welcoming of that Gospel into the heart in order to be implanted and impressed there. I noticed, too, that he speaks to us by the affections. The whole of the Gospel is, in my judgment, mainly a continuous appeal to what is deepest and tenderest in the human heart: "Lovest thou me?" breathes from the cross, from the grave, from his ascension, from his intercession at God's right hand. And if there be one feature of the Gospel more prominently distinguished than any other, it is its tendency to create in us responsive love, and its recognition of such love as the love of Christ. We love Christ, because we see in him—in his cross and passion—in his agony and bloody sweat—in his death and burial, the evidence—the overwhelming evidence—of his infinite, sovereign, and unmerited love towards us. I noticed, in the next place, that Christ appeals to us also by our consciences. What was that feeling in the depths of the soul, as the shadow of some dark recollection swept over it, but Christ saying, "Behold, I

stand at the door, and knock?" What is that leaf turned over by a mysterious hand, and made luminous by an unearthly light, in which you read the condemnation of the past, but amid which you can all but see, like glowworms amidst the darkness of night, lights that tell you and reveal to you forgiveness for the greatest sin, salvation for the guiltiest criminal? All this is Christ knocking at the door of the human heart for admission.

I mentioned also another instrument,—namely, the preaching of the glorious Gospel. "We are ambassadors for God: as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." I also referred to another instrument by means of which he knocks at the door of the human heart, viz., his own providential dispensations. That loss which left behind it so dark a cloud, so deep a chasm; that babe which you lost in all its beauty, in its infancy, when you watched the cold shadow as it spread over its brow, and at last saw the spirit emerge from its cold marble shrine, the shrine of your parental idolatry,—that babe thus taken from you in its bloom, was a knock by the hand of love, seeking for that supremacy which even your babe ought not to have occupied, and which belongs to Christ alone. The loss of your property, the breaking up and blasting of your prospects—all these things are, Christ in his mercy making your bosom cease to be a pantheon for a thousand gods, in order that it may be a palace for himself, and asking for it as a temple in which he shall be priest, and sacrifice, and altar, and all and in all. I now add, what I ought to have added then, but to which I only briefly alluded, that the last and most powerful instrument by which he appeals for admission is, the Holy Spirit. Men have asked me to prove that the human heart is corrupt. I would not quote a text to prove it, though I might quote many; but I would quote this fact, that it needed not only God in my nature to forgive me, but it needs still God in my heart to enable me to believe that fact, even upon the authority of God himself. All that is written on every page of the Bible—all that is breathed in every promise—all that is enunciated in every threat—falls powerless, absolutely powerless, upon the human heart, until the God that inspired the Bible takes the texts he has inspired, and makes them no longer to be in word only, but in power, in man's

heart. But you say then, If it need the Spirit of God thus to open our hearts for the admission of Christ, what can we do? I answer, You can do this; you can refuse to admit—you can shut the door—you can fasten it still more strongly—you can double-bolt it: you can do all this; you can defy God, you can destroy yourself. There is a great deal of power still left in man; but that power is exerted in the wrong direction. You cannot change your own heart; but recollect, the deep conviction that you cannot do so, if real, will be followed by the instant evidence that the Holy Spirit of God has done so. Paul preached the Gospel at Philippi; Lydia was one of his congregation; it is told us, not that Paul opened Lydia's heart, but that "the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, to receive those things which were spoken of Paul." But when the Spirit of God acts upon the human heart, he does not, as I told you, do so by the exertion of a mechanical force. Christ might *command* admission to the human heart; but instead of doing so—instead of thundering for admission as a king, he prays for admission as a suppliant; and I told you the reason. The same law which prevails in the constitution of our country prevails in the higher world. All the rains of heaven and all the winds of all the four quarters of the globe may beat into that poor man's house, but the Queen of England dare not enter it without the owner's permission. The Lord of glory seems to recognise, in the palace that he once made so fair and so beautiful for himself, some remains of its aboriginal magnificence—some fragments of its ancient sovereignty; and he acts as if he would not enter into a man's bosom unless the owner of it will make him welcome. Hence, the Bible tells us that God's people "are made willing in the day of his power;" and that the Spirit of God works within us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." We are saved, not against our wills, but with our full consent and in harmony with our wills; the Spirit works in us, and by us, and through us, but, unquestionably, he does not work dead against us. We have the evidence of the manner in which the Spirit works declared by the prophet Hosea, where we are told, "I drew them with cords of a man, with the bands of love: I was unto them as them that take off the yoke." "With cords of a man," *i. e.* by their reason

and judgment, or rationally; “bands of love,” *i. e.* by the affections. But when all this has taken place, the rational attraction, the affectionate attraction, there is superadded—and without which all would be vain—the omnipotent attraction: “*I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love.*” But the fact is, whenever we begin to enter into metaphysical reasoning, in order to reconcile God’s sovereignty with man’s responsibility—man’s will and God’s will—we are puzzled, perplexed, “in wandering mazes lost.” But the simple Christian, who believes that he can do nothing, and that God must do all, or nothing will ever be done, has no difficulty whatever; he feels his own impotence, applies for aid in the right quarter and in the right name, and having obtained it, he rises after that appeal a justified, a saved, a sanctified man.

Now, having noticed all these points, I wish to show you why men do not open. I have told you by what means Christ appeals to the human heart, and on what grounds he asks for admission. Why is it that men do not, after they see it is reasonable, after they feel such strong attractions,—how is it that after all this, except for the Spirit of God working in sovereignty and with power, they do not admit Christ to the possession of their hearts? Reason, conscience, religion, all plead for admission: how is it then that we still resist? It is because the heart is unsanctified and unsubdued; and till the Spirit of God that made it shall subdue it, it is enmity against God. An instinctive apostasy is in every one of us, and while all the faculties and affections that we have urge us to admit Christ to supremacy, the heart hangs back. And why does it so hang back? Not merely because it is enmity against him; although this is true: but because it is conscious of the contrast between the holiness of the sovereign who seeks supremacy within it, and the unholiness and pollution that is in its unsounded depths—depth after depth—greater than man’s eye has ever seen, or man’s tongue has ever declared; and the deepest depravity is ever the highest folly, for it keeps out the light which would reveal it to be what it really is, wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and destitute of all things. But no one needs to be told that not seeing a thing does not make that thing cease to be. Not having

my heart revealed to me as it is, does not make that heart cease to be what God has declared that it is. I have read of a Brahmin who, in arguing with a Christian missionary on the claims of the Gospel, objected, amongst other things, to Christianity because it allowed Christians to eat animal food, which he believed to be unlawful. When the missionary visited him, he was eating an exquisite fruit, fragrant, delicious, and, in that climate, refreshing. The missionary said, You advocate eating vegetable diet only, and you will not touch animal food. It is only your ignorance that makes you believe in your innocence in this respect; for if your sight were only sharpened, you would see that you are even now eating animal food. The missionary thereupon took a powerful microscope, and revealed to him the fact, that while he prided himself that he was eating vegetable food only, he was every moment destroying thousands of animalculæ, or living creatures. It is much the same with our heart; it is enmity to God — involved in apostasy from him; and it is so whether it be revealed to us or not. Better have the fact revealed, though it should shock us by its terrible apocalypse, than remain ignorant of the fact, and ignorant therefore of the only prescription that can alter and restore us.

But there is another reason why man shrinks from Christ coming into his heart, and it is that feeling — half-uttered, half-suppressed — that we cannot clearly define, and that we dare not plainly divulge — that we do not realize those truths which the minister insists on from the pulpit, and the Bible repeats in strains of music and in accents of thunder from almost every passage. We fancy that justification by faith, the forgiveness of sin by the blood of Christ, the renewal of the heart by the Holy Spirit of Christ, is certainly a thing most expedient and appropriate for penal settlements, and prisons and penitentiaries,—for the offscourings and outcasts of human kind; but we do not believe, though we do not openly confess and say so, that the Queen of England herself needs, just as much as the thief in his prison and the convict in his cell, that heart-change which alone can fit her or them or us for the kingdom of heaven. This is not the dogma of a party, nor the mere proposition of a sect, but it is the announcement of an immutable and everlasting truth—

true in all ages—applicable to all ranks, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Do not shrink from the full acceptance of this truth in the foolish notion that you do not need this great change. You need to be turned inside out; you need not merely to be patched up, but re-made. A Christian is not a patched-up worldling—a gap closed here, and a piece removed there, and a better piece substituted elsewhere; but he is a man in whose experience all things are become new—his principles, faculties, affections, soul, spirit, are all made new by the regenerative influence of the Holy Spirit of God.

But there is another reason why persons do not admit Christ to the supremacy of their hearts, and it is Satan’s most successful barrier to the spread and progress of the Gospel. It is our not refusing Christianity, or saying we never will accept the Gospel, but our adjournment of it till another occasion. Our passions will not let us accept the Gospel, for then they would be extinguished,—a result which we dislike and deprecate; our conscience will not let us reject the Gospel, for then, aware of its truth, it would torment us. We are in a strait between two: and in this suspension of our judgment, in this pause into which everlasting destinies may be compressed, Satan steps in and says, “Do not reject the Gospel, for I see your conscience would not stand that; do not accept the Gospel, for it is plain your lusts and evil habits will not stand this. The composition of forces will lead you straight through it: adjourn it; say you will take the matter into your consideration at another period.” This is just the commencement of a series of adjournments that are adjourned to your eternal ruin and irretrievable banishment from God. Procrastination, like a fair syren, in order to charm you, will make an appointment to meet you to-morrow, and then and there to settle the controversy: you go, and you meet the spirit indeed, but it is to procrastinate yet further to the next day: then you meet the spirit then and there, and lo! it is to procrastinate again; and every time you resist the appeals of your conscience and listen to “to-morrows,” you become more able to put Christ off, till at last, to adjourn the thoughts of God and of the safety of the soul becomes the habit of a lifetime, and “hell,” in the words of an old puritan divine, “is paved with good reso-

lutions." And yet, what are you procrastinating? If it were the taking of a nauseous drug—if it were the undergoing of some painful operation, I could understand it; but you adjourn the acceptance of peace; you procrastinate the happiness you might now have in order to indulge in a misery and wretchedness and dissatisfaction, which you know, in your conscience, is your almost every day experience. And all this while Christ stands at the door and knocks. In the beautiful words of Lopez de Vega, the Spanish poet—

"Lord, what am I, that with unceasing care
 Thou didst seek after me,—that thou didst wait,
 Wet with unhealthy dews, before my gate,
 And pass the gloomy nights of winter there?
 Oh strange delusion!—that I did not greet
 Thy blest approach; and oh! to heaven how lost,
 If my ingratitude's unkindly frost
 Has chill'd the bleeding wounds upon thy feet.
 How often thine ambassadors have cried.
 'Soul, from thy casement look, and thou shalt see
 How he persists to knock and wait for thee!'
 And, oh! how often to that voice of sorrow,
 'To-morrow we will open,' I replied,
 And when the morrow came, I answer'd still, 'To-morrow.'"

And so it will be to the end of time—"I will send for you at a convenient season,"—and that convenient season never comes. But surely, if ever all things around us were in alliance with the deepest and truest convictions and impressions with us, calling upon us to open and admit that Lord to supremacy in our hearts, it is the moment in which we now live. Famine recently stalked through the sister land, and raised and left behind many a grassy hillock where all was a dead level before. Rebellion kindled its fires and unsheathed its weapons at home; and only within the last two years the flower of England's chivalry was left on the desert sands of the East. Pestilence lately flapped its wings over our land, and dropped deadly poison into many a heart. And what is all this but the Lord of glory knocking, not only at individual hearts, but at Great Britain's heart, and sounding in her ears, where those ears seemed becoming dead and deaf to it, "Thou shalt have no other God but me: thou shalt not make to thee any graven image, nor the likeness of anything

that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath : thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them," and again, sounding in her ear which seemed deaf to it, and her heart which seemed to have forgotten it, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." It was Christ knocking at Great Britain's heart, calling upon her to raise the Bible, the Sabbath, the Sanctuary to supremacy in her palace, in her parliament, in her colleges, in her schools, in her post-office,—wherever it was trodden under foot, where it needed to be hallowed and embalmed in her reverence, and surrounded by her sympathies. And what have been all the convulsions of Europe, but the footfall of Christ as he marches to take the sovereignty by force, which so many hearts are refusing to confide to him? And while your conscience is hesitating, time is rushing into the ocean of eternity. You are not standing *by* the stream, looking at it; but you are *on* it, carried on its bosom, and toward that sea which shall be unsounded misery, or shall be a harbour of perpetual joy.

But I turn now, to consider the rest of this verse, the promise, "I will come in and sup with him, and he with me"—"If any man will open, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." I wish you here to notice what Christianity really is, what, in short, salvation is. It is not the making of a thing that we have not, but it is the accepting of a thing already provided for us. The grand peculiarity of the Gospel is, that we receive salvation—we are not called upon to make it. We *accept* a perfect atonement; we having nothing to do with *making* one. Christ calls upon us, not to do something, nor to suffer something, nor to pay something in order to be saved, but to accept salvation in all its glory, fulness, and perfection, without money and without price. "If any man will open, I will come in to him." Having Christ within us is having the ground and basis of everlasting salvation. You have nothing to do preparatory to Christ coming into your heart : he enters the heart just as it is, and then he makes it just as it should be. Do but admit the King of glory, and then he will subdue it to his own mind. There is nothing in the human heart to attract Christ to it; and there is nothing in the worst, the darkest and the foulest that will repel him from it, or make him discontinue or repent the blessed process which he has been

pleased to begin. All he asks is, not that you should prepare your hearts for him, or form them for his approval, or wait till they are better before you open them; but, open-hearted welcome, and he will come into it, just as that heart now beats, with his grace to forgive it, his strength to subdue it, and his Spirit to sanctify it, filling it with holiness, and making it beautiful and happy as God made the universe when he pronounced it very good.

He says, "*If any man will open;*" it matters not who he is; whether he be Jew or Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, Ethiopian, Turk or Egyptian, Arab or African, Hindoo or Mussulman—there is no nation, or tribe, or tongue, to which his invitation of mercy does not apply; there is no graduated scale of human guilt with a zero below which Christ's mercy will not descend. He tells us that "his blood cleanseth from all sin." "*If any man*"—whatever be his social, his national, his denominational distinctions—"if any man will open, I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with me." But who says this? The Lord of glory himself. I wish you all to feel this: these words are just as true and as real as if *he* now stood here in the midst of this assembly, and proclaimed them with his own voice. In this text is suggested the difference between the Christian and the Master. Moses could say as he pointed to the serpent of brass, "Behold, and live." But Christ alone could say, "Come unto me." Moses and John and Isaiah and Peter could say, "This is the way; walk ye in it;" but Christ alone could say, "I am the way: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." It is the voice of the bridegroom himself which says, "If any man open, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me."

We see the true and characteristic process of the Gospel, for the sanctification of the human heart, unfolded and comprehended in the principle here so beautifully enunciated. To purify the human heart, to remove from it the lusts and passions which domineer within it, is not to be done by preaching against these things. We shall never expel a single lust from the human heart by simply preaching against it. It is a law wrought into the very constitution of humanity, sustained and sanctioned by

the Spirit of God, that the only way to dislodge the passion, the preference, the desire that is evil, is to bring to bear upon it the power and influence of a passion, a preference, or a principle that is good. It is what Dr. Chalmers called, in his own peculiar language, the "expulsive force of a new affection." We are to discharge Antichrist from his throne, not by preaching against Popery only, but by holding up Christ in his glory and his beauty. We are to extinguish the inferior earthly light, by bringing to overwhelm it the brighter and the more glorious lustre of an unsetting sun. We are to dislodge the evil that is in us, only by the application of the good that is in Christ. And therefore the way to make the heart pure, and to cleanse it from the sins with which it is polluted, is to bring the Lord of the temple into it, that he may beautify and glorify it for himself. No other process will avail. One man, for instance, by the useful efforts of the teetotallers, is made to cease to be a drunkard; but if he do not become a Christian, just as sure as that man lives, he will become a sensualist or some such sinner; and if a sensualist is induced, by the force of reasoning, to cease to be a sensualist, he then becomes, most likely, an avaricious man; and if he is led to abandon his avarice, he will take up some other grand and absorbing preference or passion in its stead: for man's heart can no more be without a sovereign, than heaven can be without a God. Man's bosom was made to be a palace; and if it have not the King of glory in it, it will have Satan the usurper in it. And so long as you seek to drive out one characteristic and ruling passion by the substitution of another, or merely by preaching against it, you will find that you have only driven out the one unclean spirit that seven others may come in and occupy its place. But you are not, therefore, to say that it is not good that the drunkard should be made sober, or that the sensualist should be made pure; because, though you have not wrought any change which will be permanently good, the probability is that you will bring him within the reach of the blessed Gospel. If you can make a man come to the house of God, you have at least brought him within the means of grace; but as far as the fact itself goes, if you expel the one preference, you only leave space for a more terrible passion to come in. Just

on the same principle, that when fire has been set to the long grass in the vast prairies of America, and the wild Indians see the immense sheet of flame travelling towards them with the rapidity of lightning along the ground, they instantly kindle a fire in their immediate neighbourhood, and burn all the dry grass and brushwood for a few hundred yards round them, and when the flame reaches that spot, there is nothing left for it to feed upon, and thus the one flame extinguishes the other,—the Divine prescription, the infallible specific, for expelling the evil spirits from the heart of man, is to admit the King of glory to reign and triumph within it.

And now let me remind you, that when Christ comes into the human heart, the first effects of his approach will not be all that you could desire. No man has so dark and deep a conception of himself as that man in whom the work of grace is just beginning. For when that unutterable light enters the dark shades of my heart and conscience, it will reveal to me depth upon depth, evil upon evil, abyss upon abyss, deeper and deeper still; and in proportion as the soul's eye sees its sins more clearly, will the soul's sensibilities feel them more acutely; and instead of being consciously better, happier, more at rest, you will at first feel more miserable and wretched. We must all experience a deep descent into hell, before we begin our ascent into heaven. It is from the extremest point of our own depravity, wickedness, emptiness, ruin, that we see in the greatest lustre, and in the richest beauty, the unsearchable wealth of Christ. But after this storm there will be a calm. "I will come in and sup with him, and he with me"—*i. e.* I will not only do them good, but I will make them feel that I am doing them good. Not only will I "sup with him," *i. e.* do him good; but "he shall sup with me," *i. e.* he shall be conscious of that good. Supper, in ancient times, was the familiar and social meal. It was then that the master of the feast treated all his guests as equals, and entered into familiar and interesting conversation with them. It is thus that Christ comes into our hearts as to a high and blessed festival, at which he manifests himself to us, and we are made to see that manifestation. It is a joyful moment when the Sun of righteousness shines bright upon the soul; its withered branches are clothed

with new leaves and fair blossoms, and its long silent caves are eloquent with new, glorious, and inexhaustible melodies; and man comes to learn that regeneration of heart and transformation by the power of the Gospel is not a mere dogma, a mere matter of form or ceremony, but a reality full of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. My dear friends, this is Christianity: Christ in the heart, and this alone, is Christianity. Christianity is not the shibboleth of a sect; it is not the dogma of a school; it is not succession from the Apostles; but it is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is Christ in the heart. Be not satisfied with standing by Christianity, or in hearing of Christ; but feel and know that your only safety is Christ in you. Be not satisfied with subscribing to an orthodox creed or confession of faith, or with repeating the most beautiful Litany: all this is consistent with the absence as well as with the presence of Christianity. But open your heart—accept him who knocks and seeks for admission, and then you will not need evidence that the Bible is true. If an angel were to come from the realms of glory and testify that the Bible is true, that would be but a creature's testimony; if a lost spirit, wrapped in his flame-shroud, were to come from the realms of the lost and testify in tones of anguish that Christianity is true, that would be also a creature's testimony; but when a man is turned from darkness unto light—once dead, now living—hateful and hating, now loving and beloved, and bearing on his brow the image of his God, and in his heart Christ the hope of glory, this is God's testimony that Christianity is true, it is Divine evidence, the most consummate, the most convincing, the most infallible. Christ in you will make your heart a Tabor, and every day a transfiguration. Old age may creep over you, and grey hairs whiten your head, and the brow grow wrinkled like the brown sea-sand from which the tide of life is ebbing, but your heart will feel green, and young, and buoyant, and the longest evening shadows will point nearest to the morning twilight.

Is Christ in your hearts? Is there a new atmosphere around you? Is the cold avalanche that once chilled and compressed your heart, thawed into genial sympathies and charities that will feed and refresh all around? Are the sighs of your heart now

prayers, and its joys now praise? Is it calm, quiet, resting in the Lord and waiting patiently for him? Quiet is the accompaniment of power and satisfaction. The full soul is silent; it is only the rising and falling tides that rush murmuring through their channels. Such a heart is thankful for every blessing God sends, and ever eager for any duty he may appoint.

Christ in the heart will surely and speedily lead to Christ in the home—that sanctuary of strength—that source of a pure and noble people—that birth-place of yet unimagined possibilities of good. The Saviour in the soul will shine out and illuminate all around. No home is truly beautiful, till rays from Tabor and Gethsemane and Calvary light upon it. There can be no purely bright scene till lighted up by Christ's smile, nor any pure joy that is not kindled by his breath. When he is all and in all in the house, all things become changed. Sickness unlocks new sympathies, losses are met by new heroism, and death itself is seen and felt to be but God's process of colonizing heaven by selecting for it the choicest specimens of earth.

Christ in the heart will ally us to every mission of love, beneficence, and grace, till that "hope of glory" which Christ is within us is realized in that blessed rest in which means cease, because the end is attained, and all discords and divisions will be lost in pure and eternal harmony, and the tree of life and the river of life shall be the joy and privilege of all the people of God.

LECTURE XXXIV.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." — REV. iii. 21.

IN the address or epistle to every Church of the seven, there is always the recognition of an overcoming one, and the promise of a special reward to him that thus overcomes. In every instance, the promise is given to the victor only; and in every case we are led to see that the victory is only to him who believeth that Jesus is the Christ; "for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." And this teaches us too, that, if there be a chronological scale in the seven Churches,—if they be types of seven successive periods in the history of Christianity—I do not say or think they are, though some do so,—then we are taught by this, that in every age a Christian must expect to have conflict, and in every age a true Christian may be assured that he will have victory. The world may change its form, it may become more beautiful, or it may appear more friendly, but it is the world still, and he that is the friend of the world is the enemy of God. By the world I do not mean the stones of the earth, the sweet streams, the trees, the hills, the valleys—the stars of the sky, or the flowers that are the smiles of God and the stars of the earth: these are not sinful, and to admire them and to love them is not to be guilty of sin. What I mean by the world is, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." These are the component parts of the world, just as righteousness and peace and joy are the component parts of the

kingdom of God. I have explained to you before the nature of the Christian's conflicts: I have also explained to you the resources and the secrets of the Christian's victory. This evening I take one special thought, and dwell upon it, and it is this; that while the whole Church or corporate body of Christians is rebuked, reprimanded, encouraged, exhorted, advised, the promise is always made to the *individual*. For instance, in chap. ii. 10, "Be *thou* faithful unto death, and I will give *thee* a crown of life;" ver. 19, "To *him* that overcometh;" ver. 26, "He that overcometh;" chap. iii. 5, "*He* that overcometh shall be clothed, &c.;" ver. 12, "*Him* that overcometh will I make to sit upon my throne," — and so in each of the epistles. In other words, while so many promises, exhortations, and warnings are given to the body, a special promise is also given to the individual in the body that overcomes. Now I am desirous of commenting this evening on the importance and value of the *individual*. We speak much of corporate bodies, and attach to them great importance. We are prone either to over-estimate or to under-estimate the individual.

Now, in the first place, it is possible to over-estimate the individual's importance. Each of us, at one season of his life, has had a grand conception of his own excellence and value. Many are apt to think, "If I should be removed, who could supply my place? Who can follow me? Nobody can do my duty but myself; and if I be removed, the machine shops, and all the noble and magnificent results will instantly disappear." My dear friend, you over-estimate yourself. The fact is, very few will miss you when you are gone; a handful will go about the streets weeping, but the great world will rush on just as it has rolled before. It is quite possible, therefore, for you to disappear from the world and yet scarcely to be missed; and when God removes you, the same infinite and inexhaustible resources will raise up a nobler and a better to take your place.

———"The gay will laugh
When thou art gone—the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one as before will chase
His favourite phantom."

But it is possible, on the other hand, to under-estimate the importance of the individual. If it be possible to have too lofty a conception of our own value, we may likewise have too mean and unworthy a notion of it. Some one, perhaps, looks around him upon this vast world : he sees it peopled with busy millions upon millions, to whom his very name is unknown, and he says to himself, "What am I amid so many?" He gazes into the vast expanse of the firmament above him, and he sees clusters of orbs constituting groups revolving around suns, and those suns with innumerable clusters constituting only another group revolving round an inner sun ; and he says, "What am I in the immensity of the universe? A grain amid the sands of the sea-shore—a bubble on the face of the ocean—a spark that appears on the wave, is quenched, and disappears for ever."

But there is surely a correct estimate ; and the importance of coming to it is obvious from such facts as these. Some under-estimating society and over-estimating self, and thinking that society was worthless, and that the individual was everything, have left the duties and the responsibilities of the world altogether ; and have gone with Anthony and Jerome, and innumerable monks, and have spent their lives in deserts and caves and mountains, thinking that as individuals they could do all, and that by society they were only hampered, discouraged, or interfered with. Others again, supposing that the individual can do nothing at all, have formed themselves into bodies, and merging the personal in the corporate, have become mere cogs in the vast machinery—mere cranks and pivots in the great system, and have lost irretrievably their individual dignity and importance by merging themselves in the mass. Let us look, then, at the true place that the individual should occupy ; and in order to do so, you must look each at himself, not insulated and alone, but in connexion with and in relation to all the multitude by which you are surrounded. The sea-sand is made up of innumerable grains ; the sea itself is made up of innumerable drops ; the milky way, which seems but a cluster of pure brilliancy, is itself a group of countless stars. The body itself is made up of so many separate members. Look at the eye alone, separate from the body ; you may under-estimate, you may over-estimate it : look at the eye in

connexion with the other senses and members of the body, and you see its true and its important place. So in an army : a private soldier drops down weary with the march, or is smitten down by the shot of the enemy, and he is scarcely missed ; but if each private soldier were to disappear, the whole army would disappear altogether. Thus while the individual, looked at alone, insulated from the mass, seems comparatively worthless, the individual, as a component part of the vast host, is of great and indispensable importance.

It is thus that each looking at himself not insulated, absolute, and alone, but as part and parcel of a system to which he contributes his quota, and the removal from which of that quota would be a mighty gap, will see how it is possible neither to over-estimate nor to under-estimate, but to assign to himself his right and his true position.

We must also recollect that each of us is necessarily in a family, in a parish, in a nation, in society, and has therefore some influence of some kind, and that influence may be exerted by us unconsciously, or it may be exerted consciously and with design ; but in either case we can no more denude ourselves of leaving around us ceaseless impressions for good or evil, than we can denude ourselves of our responsibility or our immortality. There is not a man that walks the streets, who does not go home in some degree modified by the sign-boards he has read, the shop windows he has seen, and the carriages that have rolled past him in the streets. There is not a child that walks from its mother's door to our day-schools, that has not stamped upon it in its transit from the one to the other, impressions that will be lasting, probably, as its life. And when men talk about the question whether society should be educated or not, they should remember that society never was left without education from Adam's day to the present. The only question is, shall it be educated on the principles that unfold to it the kingdom of heaven, or on the principles that shall deteriorate it below what it is, and still more injure it hereafter ? If, then, each in his place is exercising a ceaseless influence, let us recollect that each individual may be producing, consciously or unconsciously, effects of the greatest importance. A look leaves an impression. Every word that you utter pro-

duces its echo in the heart or conscience of some one. Every deed that you do leaves an indelible shadow, like the photographic light, behind it; and every one, knowing this, should try never to do what is calculated to leave behind it an unfavourable impression. And yet this ought not to be the criterion. *Be good*, and you will always *seem* good. *Be a Christian*, and the influence you communicate, conscious or unconscious, secret or public, will be seen. But if you are not a Christian, you may screw your face into the most orthodox form, you may put on the most exquisite and beautiful mask, but the inner corruption will break forth, and men will see that it is a sham—an hypocrisy—a pretence, and not a reality.

It is thus, then, that each individual in his place is leaving and creating influences, and is therefore possessed of greater importance than he supposes; and it is therefore a momentous question, whether he be a Christian or not. But if we consider, in the next place, what an individual may do, we shall see how much that individual may effect in promoting the spread of the Gospel, of beneficence, of charity, of goodness. We shall thus see how important a part an individual may play. Now, is there not a general opinion amongst us, that ministers of the Gospel should be singularly holy, spiritual, pure-minded, and devoted? The impression is a right one; they ought to be so; but remember, they ought not to be more so than those that hear them. A Christian minister is not bound to be one whit holier than a Christian hearer. We are all bound to be what Christianity prescribes, and what its privileges dictate that we should be. But the individual by his ideas of the minister tries to lose himself in his shadow. He magnifies his estimate of the minister, by adding to him what he has subtracted from himself. And thus, thinking that he is of very little importance, and that the minister is of very great importance, he infers, logically enough, if the premises be correct, that little can be expected of him, and that everything must be expected of the minister. Now, my dear friends, you are to recollect, in contrast to such notions, that each of us is bound to be just as holy as Christ himself. “Be ye holy as I am holy,” is addressed to the people, as well as to the minister.

In the next place, is it not true that we feel, as individuals, too little our responsibility to aid the spread of the Gospel and missionary exertion? We think that as individuals we are too insignificant; it must be done by corporate bodies, by congregations, by the Church Universal. In other words, you have the idea that a congregation ought to be purely *receptive*, and in no respect *distributive*. You come and join this congregation just in order that you may enjoy privileges; that you may get your store of information; that you may have new and stronger motives inspired into your hearts; that you may be strengthened for the battle of life; that you may be enabled to be more than conquerors through Him that loved you. But you think of nothing beyond this: you like to hear the reports of the prosperity of our schools, and you enjoy the reports; but you do not care much about adding to the prosperity of those schools by personal effort and personal sacrifice. You do not mind giving attention to a good cause, if you are very much praised for it; but how few in a congregation think of originating a good cause and standing by it, even if alone in the midst of that congregation! My dear friends, as individuals you are to come to the church to receive the greatest good; but you are to be constant receivers, that you may be constant distributors. You are there not to be the chief recipients of love and joy and peace, but to be the active and untiring distributors of all that can bless mankind, and give glory to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let all serve to convince you of this, that each individual, when he associates himself with a Christian church, or with the Church Universal, enjoys all the privileges and acquires by that act all the responsibility of that church. Just as in an army each soldier ought to feel that the honour of his country and his sovereign is as much entrusted to him as if he were the only combatant on the field of battle, so each member of a Christian congregation ought to feel that the spread of the Gospel, the maintenance of the truth, the Christian education of the young, are all just as much committed to him as if he were the only worshipper in that audience, and the only advocate and professor of the Gospel in the world. And it is by each individual thus, as it were, isolating himself in thought and realizing his own in-

dividual responsibility before God, that great and magnificent results can be expected to be attained. In order to show you that individuals may do much more than they imagine, and ought to do much more than they do, let me just remind you of this fact,—that there is not an individual in this congregation whose place in society, whose peculiar turn of mind, whose temperament, powers and influence, are the exact copies and *fac similes* of the same things in another individual. Whatever we have in common is Christ's; whatever each has separately, and distinctly, and peculiarly, is Christ's also. Each individual must therefore try to ascertain what is the specific talent that he has, and then seek to consecrate it; what is the specific influence he can exert, and instantly exert it for the truth; what is the contribution that he individually can make to the cause of Christ, and instantly set about making it. And has it not been by individuals alone, and by a deep sense of individual responsibility in the midst of the mass, that the greatest good has been done? Those tremendous excavations on the railways have been all done by the exertions of individuals. If each railway labourer had failed to do his part, the whole had been a failure. Those steamers are all the result of each individual taking his place and doing his part. Lord Nelson saw the importance in naval tactics of what I am now trying to illustrate, when he said, "England expects," not the *whole fleet*, to do its duty; that would have failed,—but "England expects *every man* to do his duty." He tried to impress upon them a sense of the duty of each individual, and that to each man was committed the honour of England's flag, and that with his cowardice or his bravery England's freedom would stand or fall. And John Wesley, who was as great in his department as Nelson was in his, said that the true way for Methodism to flourish was, to have *each* Methodist employed at something, and *always* employed. He knew that it was by making the individual feel that he had responsibility—that he had something to do—that he should make the whole overcome and be more than conquerors.

Perhaps it may show yet more the force and therefore the importance of the individual, if I point out that it was always by individuals that the elements of corruption have been introduced

into the mass. You do not find whole communities become all at once socially and universally corrupt. One young man is infected by some taint from without; he goes and mingles with his fellow-shopmen, or his fellow-*employées*, and then communicates the taint he has received, till the whole mass becomes corrupt. Milton saw this when he described Satan as intimately acquainted with the fact, that to overcome the whole race, he must overcome first the individual; and very beautifully does he thus write of Satan :—

“He sought them both, but wish’d his hap might find
 Eve separate; he wish’d, but not with hope
 Of what so seldom chanced; when to his wish,
 Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
 Veil’d in a cloud of fragrance where she stood,
 Half spied, so thick the roses blushing round
 About her glowed.
 Behold alone, said he,
 The woman, opportune to all attempts.
 The husband, him I view far off, not nigh.
 So spake the enemy of mankind, enclosed
 In serpent, inmate bad, and toward Eve
 Address’d his way.”

If Satan had encountered Adam and Eve both together, perhaps he had failed; but finding one alone, he saw that she would be more likely to be taken in the snare and fall. It is the same in what is good. It is the individual becoming first acquainted with the truth; next, conscious of his responsibility to spread it, and seizing on individual recipients, that truth is spread with the greatest speed, and the grand cause of Christianity promoted throughout the world.

Thus then I have shown you that whilst you do not over-estimate the individual, you are not to under-estimate him. You cannot under-estimate your own personal excellence. You cannot over-estimate your own personal responsibility. God does not ask the man that has two talents to bring as great results as the man that had five; but he asks each to bring the result of the talent that God has given. Now, my dear friends, let each one look this day around him in this place: let him look around and within his home—let him ascertain what point he has that contrasts with his fellow—what influence he can exert

which his neighbour cannot; and let him see that on him devolves the duty of wielding that influence to the glory of God and the spread of the everlasting Gospel. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me upon my throne, even as I have sat down with my Father on his throne." This leads me, in the last place, to notice the promise here given. The throne of God, we are told, is in heaven; God says, by the prophet Isaiah, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool." There was a great design in this. He did not say, My throne is placed in the sun, the moon, Arcturus, Orion, or the Pleiades; because, if he had done so, the Jew would have found a visible object which he would have believed to be the seat and the residence of Deity, and that visible object would have become the object of his adoration and worship. But God wished to teach the Jew that no visible object in nature was the exponent of him. There was no one spot consecrated to be his peculiar and exclusive dwelling-place. He taught the Jew when he worshipped, to lift his heart above all that is seen and temporal, and to feel it to be but a type, while he rejoiced to worship amid the unseen and the eternal. So when Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," he said, substantially, "I am set down with my Father on his throne:" I am raised to all power as Mediator: I am exalted to that glory which I had with my Father before the world was, and I am there for you, to plead your cause, to represent your interests, and to superintend those interests till time shall be no more. Beautiful thought! a portion of our dust is enshrined in glory! The first-fruits of our common humanity is placed upon the throne of Deity! Jesus never can forget the orb he trod, the world he breathed on, the race for whom he died. It seems to me that this earth is the Mary, or the Martha, or the Lazarus amid the orbs of creation; it is the planet "which Jesus loved," and to show that he did so, he has carried a portion of its dust into the presence of Deity; a perpetual memento—a glorious pledge that creation shall be redeemed from its groans and rescued from its travails; and having been pronounced "good" when it was made, shall be pronounced again "very good" when it shall be finally restored.

Now, says our Lord, "He that overcometh shall share with me

my throne." "Father, I will that those thou hast given me be with me where I am," *i. e.* or my throne, "that they may behold my glory." *In* Christ is our safety; *for* Christ is our duty; *with* Christ is our everlasting happiness. At present we "see through a glass darkly;" then we shall "see him face to face:" and "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Where Christ is visibly and personally *now* we cannot say. As I told you on the morning of this day, I do not see the necessity for supposing that heaven is above or below. The fact is, what we call above and below is mere phraseology; what is above at midday is below at midnight, and ever as the earth revolves upon its axis they change and interchange places. It may be that the souls of those that we love, severed from their earthly tenements, walk amid our homes, watch over us in our travels, mingle silently, but no less sweetly and eloquently, their hymns in our worship; and that we are farther removed from our absent brothers who are in Australia, in India, or even in Scotland, than we are from our dead fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, whose souls may walk the world, and see and hear us, though we can neither see nor hear them. We know not, I say, at present, where heaven is; but wherever it be, it is happiness—perfect, unalloyed, unspeakable happiness. He that overcometh shall enjoy that happiness, for he shall sit with Christ on his throne. Here again we have the evidence of grace: "To him that overcometh will I *give* to sit," &c. He conquers, and yet he does not merit. It is a free-will *grant* to the last. The least and the loftiest mercy is of grace. Our first absolution and our last coronation are equally of grace. All we are, all we have, and all we do, is "not of works, lest any man should boast: it is of the grace of Christ alone."

And then the Saviour adds, "as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne." This indicates some communing between Christ and them that are his. And that prayer of his recorded in John xvii. will illustrate this promise, "I pray that all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee"—I seated on thy throne, and they with me, and heaven and earth constituting one happy and glorious brotherhood. But what is meant, it may be asked, by Christ overcoming? The answer is

given by the Apostle, in Hebrews, where he says, "Christ was made perfect by suffering;" and then he adds, "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." In other words, there is no royal road to that throne; there is no path to it on which there is not a cross, and on which thorns are not growing. We must all through much tribulation, social or personal, pass to the kingdom of heaven. And Christ himself now occupies that throne, to keep it for us: "I go," he says, "to prepare a place for you; and I will come again, and receive you unto myself."

And now, what is the way to have our hearts less set upon the world? It is to have them more set upon these promises. Read all the promises in succession, as addressed to each of the seven Churches; bind them all together, and you have the rest and the glory that remain for the people of God. Whatever may be specified in each of these eloquent promises, — or whatever may be its minute, its material, and its distinguishing meaning, — we can say of them, each and all, they are "exceeding great." They are the first-fruits of that glorious harvest which shall be reaped by many a pilgrim who has sown in tears; they are the grand truths of God imprisoned in the formulas of human speech; the rays of which break through and give us some conceptions of the splendour that is yet before us. Bring together the whole of the promises given to the seven Churches, and they constitute the sparkling gems of our heavenly crown, and Christ is the focus in which all their splendour and their beauty are concentrated.

Stand then, my dear friends, by these bright hopes, animated and sustained by these pure and holy motives. In the language of the Apostle, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." If all the past in your experience is dark, the future is perfectly open, and it waits to be filled by you; what you make it, it will be by the grace of God. If the silent shadow of lost opportunities sits cold upon you; if the memory of rejected mercies and abused privileges drips upon your hearts like rain-drops from wintry branches; if all that you can think of in the past is melancholy, sad, oppressive; look forward — the future is open, waiting for you to impress upon it what shall make it beautiful as prayer can desire, or full of calamity and curse as Satan can wish it.

Turning, then, our backs upon the past, and seeking only absolution for it through the blood of Jesus—let us raise our faces to the future, and, looking to Jesus still, let us run the race that is set before us in the Gospel; for—

“Life is real—life is earnest;
And the grave is not its close;
“Dust thou art, to dust returnest,”
Was not spoken of the soul.

“Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end and way;
But to see that each to-morrow,
Finds us further than to-day.”

LECTURE XXXV.

THE LAST APPEAL.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”
—REV. iii. 22.

TO-NIGHT I give my closing Lecture on the epistles to the seven Churches of Asia. On this last verse I wish to make some closing practical remarks, though all have been meant to be practical, and I trust have been more or less applicable to you all. It appears that there were originally twelve churches in Asia, and not merely seven. The question has been asked again and again, How is it that John speaks of the existence of only seven, but is silent on the existence of the other five? Further, it has been very naturally asked, Why he writes to these seven not as to seven churches selected from the twelve, but as to *the* seven churches, as if they were the only existing churches in Asia? The other churches which are known to have existed in Asia, are the Church of Tralles, to which Ignatius, an uninspired, but early father, writes an epistle; the Church of Magnesia, to which he also writes; the Church of Miletus; the Church of Hierapolis; and the Church of Colosse, to which the Apostle Paul has written an epistle. Now the question is, Why does the Apostle select seven out of the twelve, and leave Tralles, Magnesia, Hierapolis, Miletus, and Colosse, without any epistle addressed to any of them? and, Why does he call seven that he selects *not seven* selected because pre-eminent, but **THE SEVEN**, as if these were the only existent churches in Asia? The following facts have been ascertained; and the discovery of these facts proves, if indeed it needs proof, that the Apocalypse was written at the date at which it assumes to have been written, *i. e.* about the year 96; and that

it was written by one who was placed in the circumstances in which John the Seer or the Evangelist was placed. We are perfectly convinced of all this on other grounds, but it is not unimportant to bring every incidental fact, to make appear to you more clear and obvious the great truth, that any or all of the books of the New Testament are not only given to us as they were written, but are authentic, and were written by the persons whose names they bear, and at the time and date, and under the circumstances now universally believed. Eusebius, an ancient Greek historian, in a work called his *Χρονικόν*, which is a mere chronological summary of events and facts, and in no respect of a controversial character, states that three cities, Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colosse, were destroyed by an earthquake in Nero's reign; in other words, that these three cities were destroyed previous to the date at which John wrote the Apocalypse; but you will perceive among the three that are said to have been destroyed, he places Laodicea, to which John records an address or epistle; and you will be prepared to conclude, on hearing this, that my quotation proves too much, for it would prove that Laodicea must have been also non-existent at the date of the Apocalypse. John has recorded and recognised the existence of Laodicea, though Eusebius states that, in common with the other cities, it was destroyed by an earthquake.

An incidental extract is found in a heathen historian who hated Christianity, and called it "exécrabilis superstitio"—"a hateful superstition," namely Tacitus, in which he makes the following statement: see *Annals*, book xiv., ch. 27: "This year (Nero 6th,) Laodicea, a famous city of Asia, having been destroyed by an earthquake, was rebuilt without any aid from us, (Rome,) and solely at its own expense." Now you see how clearly the reason comes out, why John should have written to Laodicea, but not to Hierapolis and Colosse. Tacitus says nothing of the two last; the presumption is, therefore, that their ruins lay as the earthquake left them; but he expressly states, without any reference to any religious question, or to anything in the Bible, that one city, Laodicea, was rebuilt. John found it rebuilt, and records an epistle to it. He found Colosse and Hierapolis in ruins, and, as a matter of course, there is no epistle to them. Now do you

see how beautifully Eusebius, the Christian annalist, not thinking of the Apocalypse at all, and Tacitus, the heathen infidel, who had no more idea of it than he had of Sir Isaac Newton's discoveries in astronomy, both *accidentally*, as the world would say, but as we know under the pressure of the Providence of God, relate a fact that shows, eighteen centuries afterward, why two cities were not addressed, namely, Hierapolis and Colosse, and why Laodicea which had suffered with them was addressed — this circumstance arising from its having been rebuilt, prior to John's writing the Apocalypse. So all that is written by man will yet attest the truth and grandeur of what is written by God.

I have now disposed of two cities, and reduced the number to ten. The question is now, Why does John record epistles to seven, and leave Tralles, Magnesia, and Miletus, the remaining three, without any epistle addressed to them? Again, we have facts of a no less conclusive character, that throw light upon this. Miletus, it is evident by an existent epistle from Apollonius [Apollon. Tyan. Ep. 68,] to the Miletians, was also destroyed by an earthquake, and the Christians in it, as being, according to the popular superstition, the cause of the earthquake, were completely exterminated. This alone disposes of the Church of Miletus. As to those of Magnesia and Tralles, we have no evidence that there was a Christian Church in either of these places, *previous* to the date of the Apocalypse: but we have evidence that the Churches of Tralles and Magnesia existed *after* the date of the Apocalypse. We read of the existence of these churches, but we know just as clearly, from some allusions that I will specify, that they were founded after the date of the writing of the Apocalypse. Thus, for instance, a Bishop of Magnesia is addressed by Ignatius in his Epistle to that Church; and in that Epistle, which I perused only yesterday, I found allusions additional to those which Mr. Knight has cited in his able pamphlet, to which I am much indebted. I find that Ignatius writes to the Bishop of the Magnesians as having *φανωμένην νεωτερικὴν τάξιν*, [cap. iii. p. 179, Patr. Apost. Opera Tubingæ, 1847,] a "conspicuously recent arrangement," or an "episcopate of very recent formation;" thus proving (as he probably wrote this some little time before A. D. 106, or later)

that the Church of Magnesia was not existent when John wrote the Apocalypse, A. D. 96; but that in the course of ten years afterwards this Church had an episcopate or ecclesiastical government, recently or lately founded. And again, Ignatius, writing to the Church of Tralles about A. D. 106, calls them *νηπίοι*, which means "beginners," just recently made acquainted with the elements and first instructions of the Gospel: and, when he speaks to Polybius, the bishop or minister of that Church, (and I may mention that a bishop in those days was not what we understand by a bishop in these days; he was a very poor man, with a very small chapelry or episcopate, and probably a very small congregation, and still less stipend, and still less splendour, working very hard, never having heard of sinecures, non-residence, pluralities, and other novelties;) he speaks of him as having been lately at Smyrna, where he was minister or bishop previous to his transference, — not to a richer living, but to a more perilous and arduous cure, *ὅς παρεγένετο θελήματι Θεοῦ ἐν Σμύρνῃ* their bishop, "who, with the will of God, was present," or "who attended to the will of God in Smyrna," (as if he had been comparatively young when sent to Smyrna,) — to take the oversight of the Church of Tralles. He therefore calls upon the Christians of Tralles to pay him great deference, not to treat him harshly, but to give him great obedience and reverence. Thus we infer that the Church of Miletus was destroyed, and Christianity uprooted, before John wrote the Apocalypse. We discover next, from internal evidence in the epistles of Ignatius, that the Church of Magnesia was founded several years subsequent to the writing of the Apocalypse; and the presumption is, that the Church of Tralles, from the allusion of Ignatius to the youth of its bishop, and his having been recently labouring in Smyrna, was also founded after the close of the first century. We thus give reasons, why these five Churches were omitted; and we thus prove that the Seven Apocalyptic Churches were not seven selected out of twelve cotemporaneous churches existing in Asia in the days of John, but were the only existing ones, and therefore, THE *seven* Churches of Asia; and thus from extraneous sources we gather rays of light, indicating the facts of Revelation, and in this the earnest of that grand result with which prophecy

is burdened, when all heathen historians, doubting skeptics, geologists, astronomers, and botanists, critics and poets, and all men, shall come and testify in one loud acclaim, that what God has written is true.

Having noticed these very important facts, I now address you on the words which I have read; words which sum up all that is said to each of the churches, and which are therefore specially applicable and appropriate in a closing address upon duties and responsibilities in connexion with what we have heard.

Of all preached from the pulpit, read from the press, and heard on the platform, the prescription is,—“Take heed *what* ye hear;” but, of all written in the Bible, spoken by Christ, recorded by the Spirit, it is written, “Take heed *how* ye hear.” The first may be truth mingled with error, and it is your duty, therefore, to discriminate and separate the precious from the evil; the last is pure unadulterated truth, and the responsibility lies, not in discriminating where there is nothing to discriminate, but in how we hear and receive it. Vast importance seems to be attached throughout the Bible to that very minute organ the ear. “He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear,” is constantly repeated in the Apocalypse; “faith cometh by hearing.” Again, says the prophet, “Hear, and your soul shall live.” The ear is the channel for the entrance of, perhaps, weightier and more impressive things than the eye; certainly it is the medium of far intenser emotions, for who knows not that the word heard is more powerful and impressive than the word read? Does not the living voice of the living speaker come home with greater and more thrilling emphasis than the dead letter of the mute type? Let us, then, consider why every one that has an ear should hear, obey, and accept those catholic truths which are addressed to all Christians in the epistles to the seven Churches of Asia. The first ground on which this appeal is placed is this, the high and unquestionable authority of the speaker, (or rather writer,) namely, the Lord Jesus. Even those that were his passionate and partial hearers in the days of his flesh, were constrained to say as they listened to those lofty, dignified—those pure and yet simple utterances of Jesus,—“Never man spake like this man.” Even those that reported what he said to the Pharisees, anxious to please the

masters who paid them, were constrained to say, "He speaks not like the Scribes, but as one having authority." No one can listen to the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament, without rising with the conviction, "There is here indeed the language of a man, but loaded with the richness, the grandeur, and the authority of the sentiments of God." If any of you have ever read any of the speeches of Socrates as recorded by his disciple, you will see how he guesses, conjectures and hopes, that this may be true, or that may be false; or if any of you ever read Cicero, who approached the nearest in his longings to the Christian, and who caught some beams of the rising sun from the lofty pinnacle in the heathen world on which he stood, you will notice how he hopes that this is true, and says of the immortality of the soul, that if he cannot prove it, as he admits he cannot, yet so dear and delightful is the thought, that he is determined to die grasping it, even if he has failed logically and conclusively to demonstrate it; but when Jesus speaks, the language is simple, it is true, but the assertion is unfaltering, and unalloyed with the least element of conjecture,—"I say unto you." I may notice, too, another evidence of the grandeur of the character of Jesus, and the depths from which he speaks. When an ordinary man tells of wonderful things, he is excited by them, and he dwells upon them, and loads the thought he is anxious to convey, by expressive and accumulative imagery, and apparent anxiety to make his word be believed; but when Jesus speaks of things in the height and in the depth, such as ear never heard, he does so with the calmness and the self-possession which indicates not only that "never man spake like him," but that he speaks as God might be expected to speak when he employs human speech, and addresses the sons of men. He spoke, too, with an accompanying emphasis that gave what he said an authority that none else could claim, for to attest his mission he wrought miracles and gave proof of a beneficence and power exclusively God's. He only could say, "Ye winds, which I laid by the wave of my hand; ye billows, on whose crested heads I laid my finger and ye were still; ye blind, whose sightless eyeballs I opened; ye deaf, whose ears I unstopped; ye dead, whom I raised from corruption and restored to your homes; thou

grave, which I rent open in spite of thy struggles to retain me; thou death, whom I conquered when thou thoughtest thou hadst a victim, and didst find that thou hadst received a vanquisher; thou air, which didst open a passage for me in my ascent to the skies; ye angels, who welcomed me to your starry homes; ye apostles, who preached what I bade you in my name, and overthrew enemies, and removed obstructions, and did many marvellous works; ye barbarians now civilized; ye broken hearts bound up; ye weepers comforted; ye sinners forgiven; ye saints and martyrs, harping before the throne, and in the presence of God; — come and witness who it is that speaks to you, and by whose hand it was that ye were thus stirred;” and wind and wave, and death and the grave, and apostle and saint, and civilized and barbarian, come at his bidding, and with one consent embody their confession in the words of Nicodemus, “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do the works which thou doest, except God be with him.” It is thus we see in the teaching of Jesus a weight and an emphasis that is in the teaching of no other, and because such an one speaks, “he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.”

The second ground on which I base this appeal is the vast importance of the subject. What is the subject about which Christ speaks to us? If he told us how to make money, or how to get fame, or to become learned in the wisdom of this world, it would be of *some* importance, but I do not think that such a process is worthy of being announced to all mankind, or that it warrants such a prelude as “He that hath an ear, let him hear;” but what Christ says is “not a vain thing, — it is your life;” nay more, that Gospel which you hear from the pulpit is to every man that hears it, “a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death.” I know of no fact more solemn than this, that you may enter this house careless, but you cannot leave it without your responsibility being increased; that your having been here will tell either on your everlasting ruin, or on your everlasting bliss. If you hear of the way to escape from the one, and the way to inherit and enjoy the other, it is your own guilt that you perish. If, then, this be so, — if this blessed Gospel be that testimony, ignorance of which is ruin, the rejection of which is to reap a deadlier

curse, while the acceptance of it is to receive a crown of glory; if it be that message which is worthy of all acceptance of all men in all countries, and of all the faculties of the mind, and of all the feelings of the heart, and under all circumstances,—then the splendour of the reward it offers, the dreadful nature of the hell it bids you flee from,—the height and magnificence of the truths it addresses to you, excelled only by the magnificence to which they point, are eloquent and urgent reasons why every one that has ears to hear, should hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

I base this appeal upon the fact, that every one is called upon to investigate the claims which this Gospel makes. The Gospel of Christ challenges inquiry—it invites discussion. It does not ask you merely to accept it upon the authority of God, which it has a right to do; but it appeals to you as reasonable men, “Judge ye whether these things be so or not.” Its appeal to our reason, and its ever satisfying it where it can be satisfied, is a grand peculiarity of the Gospel. If the Apostle had been satisfied with saying, Christ died a sacrifice for our sins, and said so upon the authority of God, that would be sufficient ground for receiving it; but he is not satisfied with this—he proceeds to show you how it was impossible that man should be justified otherwise, and then, by the closest logical proof, how it is possible that man can be justified thus; and hence the Gospel is not simply a *testimony* that you receive on the authority of him that gave it, but it is an *appeal* also to your conscience, your judgment, and your heart,—to what is deepest within you,—asking you to weigh, investigate, and decide accordingly. Of all systems assuming to be divine, Christianity alone courts the light. Mahometanism may seek the haunts and caves from which its prophet came; Romanism, the system whose turrets sparkle in the crystalline light of heaven, whose caves and dungeons are so dark and deep, may shrink from the light because it is based upon error, cemented by blood, gives glory to man and detracts it in proportion from God; but Christianity—not the Christianity of the Church of Scotland, or of the Church of England, but the Christianity of the Bible—demands inquiry. It feels that it will reap the most glorious laurels when its

claims and assertions are expiscated with clearest and most unsparing analysis; and if it could speak to us in the words and use the names of modern times, it would summon Newton, the investigator of the sky; Buckland and Sedgwick, the explorers of the geological strata of the earth; it would call upon Cuvier the naturalist, Davy the chemist, Kepler the mathematician, Gibbon and Hume and Allison the great historians, prince and peer, peasant and monarch, all who have made or read the researches of men, or felt the deep wants of humanity, or are capable of discrimination,—“whosoever hath an ear to hear,”—to come and see that this blessed book hath God for its author, truth for its matter, and eternal glory for its blessed and its certain issue. In order to examine the claims of Christianity, and in order to induce you to do so, I must repeat what I have already alluded to. You must not take Christianity as represented in any creed, however excellent that creed may be—no one values a creed in its place more than I do, but I must put it in the creed’s place. The difference between a creed and the Bible is just the difference between flowers painted or delineated in a system of botany, and flowers that bloom in the broad acres where God has planted them. However beautiful these creeds may be, they are not Christianity—they are but extracts from it—precious, and in their place valuable, but broken fragments still. In examining the claims of Christianity, in searching for its origin whence it is, you must still less take any of the “isms” of any age; neither Calvinism, Arminianism, nor Episcopacy, nor Presbytery; you must value Christianity as it breathes and lives, and is portrayed, or rather speaks, in every page of God’s own blessed word. You are not to hear Christianity in man’s diluted echo, but in God’s own grand original voice. Nor are you to draw Christianity from the consecrated urn, however beautiful it may be, but from the fountain of living waters, which God himself has unsealed; and when you have tasted these waters, subject them to any test—try them by any analysis—look at them from any angle—submit them to any ordeal, and you will find they are living waters that come from the throne and lead up to the throne again; and therefore, let every one that hath an ear to hear come and hear,

and every one that is athirst come and take the water of life freely.

Not only are we to hear on these grounds, but we are also to do or carry into practical development the momentous truths we hear. I have sometimes read remarks in the papers of the day to the effect, that on the Royal Exchange is transacted all the traffic and the business of the world; that in the Parliament of England are discussed questions that affect Europe, Asia, Africa, America,—in short, every part of the globe; but if this be true of these, it is much more of the humblest Christian assembly in the world, that on the floor of that meeting-house, chapel, church, or cathedral, is transacted and sealed and settled business, infinitely more important than senators ever dreamed of or discussed—the great question that affects the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls. On the Royal Exchange, and in the Parliament of England, it is “the dead burying their dead;” but on the floor on which you are now seated it is the living God speaking unto men words which will rise and prove by your reception of them that they were your life, or by your rejection of them that they aggravated your irretrievable ruin. Within these walls (solemn and weighty thought!) human hearts are reached through human ears, with the savour of life or the savour of death; those seeds are scattered broadcast in the midst, which shall bloom in amaranthine glory into trees of righteousness, brighter and better than the cedars of Lebanon, or into thorns and brambles and briers fit only to be burned.

Within these walls are battles fought more glorious than Marathon—more weighty in results than Waterloo; in the midst of us may be discussed and settled questions which are infinitely superior to all that are transacted in the parliaments, the senates, and the cabinets of mankind. It is a very solemn thought that sabbath after sabbath processes are going on amongst us, and even at this moment in some young man’s or some young woman’s heart, which shall determine what the hereafter of either is to be. At this moment words are spoken which shall be rendered back for ever and ever in echoes of sweet music in the realms of joy, or in reverberations and crashes of thunder in the regions of eternal woe. If we do not sit down and eat at our daily board without

asking a blessing on it, surely we cannot enter these walls without lifting up our hearts to God, and praying that what we are about to hear—be it the simplest statement of the Gospel of Jesus—may not prove to us the savour of death unto death, but may prove a savour of life unto life. If this be so, let every one that hath ears to hear, hear with reverence. The preacher is an ambassador of God; his sermon is not a mere piece of entertainment for an idle fancy; he himself is not like Ezekiel's false preacher, "one that performeth on an instrument." I am not here to preach *about* you, or to preach *before* you, like a candidate for orders preaching before the presbytery or bishop, but to preach *to* you, and to each man or woman, as much as if I were in this pulpit, and that man or that woman, like the woman of Samaria, alone listening to me from that pew. What I say is the embassy of God; what I am is an ambassador of God. The lords and commons of England, when they are summoned to hear the Queen convoke or dissolve the parliament, go right reverently and uncovered into the presence of her majesty; we are met to hear the message of the King of kings and Lord of lords—the Prince of the kings of the earth; with what thankfulness and humility should we meet! and what reverence, subduedness of spirit, and solemnity of heart should we feel!

You are to hear, and "every one that hath ears to hear" should hear also with teachableness of disposition. If you come to the sanctuary seeking for fine things to tickle your ears, or for grand things to interest you, you will get, perhaps, in some places your reward: but if you come, feeling that you are sinners, setting God upon his throne, and yourselves at his footstool; if you come here, not to be pleased, but thirsting for living water; not to while away an idle hour, but to gather living manna while it comes; if, in short, you come here in earnest—anxious to know things that you did not know, and to feel the force of things you never felt before,—then "receive *with meekness* the engrafted word;" "receive the kingdom of God as a little child;" that beautiful illustration of Christian faith and confidence! Call your child of two years old to your knee; tell him something; he will listen to it; he will never think of suspecting or questioning what

you say ; and if you go into that child's presence, he will only think of you as coming arrayed in love, and will express cordial and heartfelt welcome. My dear friends, you are called upon to hear God, to believe God, to go into God's presence with the same unsuspecting confidence with which a child goes into the presence of its father, and hears from him truths and lessons which that father is anxious to teach. Sit like Mary at the feet of Jesus.

Every one that hath ears to hear, should hear with close, personal application. Just suppose each sermon to be as much meant for you, as if it were addressed to you by name. It is always a good sign when people say, "The minister's sermon was personal." The truth is, our sermons are too *impersonal*: they are not personal enough. And, perhaps, if they were more pointed, more direct, more personal than they are, there would be less crowds, and more people saying, "I won't attend that church any more; I shall give up my sitting in it; I do not like that sort of preaching; I want a preacher that will speak to me smooth things, and let me go home, and cheat and lie on the Monday, without the risk of having one's conscience disturbed next Sunday, and with the convenient hope that all will be right when I come to die." I wish each of you to hear as if everything were meant for you personally, specifically and alone. The great object of a sermon is, that the minister is to collect all the scattered rays of God's truth into one intense focus, and you are to try and place your soul, your heart, and your conscience in that focus. Do not try to present your hearts as mere hard and bright reflectors of the light that the minister distributes, but as susceptible and sensitive absorbents of that light; and when the minister tells you, as the prophet told the royal personage of old, "Thou art the man," do not look around you and say, "Does he mean so and so? Can it be this one? No doubt it was meant for that woman:" but when the minister says, "Thou art the man," look neither above nor below, to the right hand nor to the left; but look within you, and see whether it does not produce a response in the depths of your heart,—and if it does, pray with the psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me,

and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

And, in the next place, let me call upon every one that hath ears to hear, to hear with this feeling first and last, uppermost, deepest, and nethermost in his heart, that in vain may an Apollos preach, or a Paul plant, or the most eloquent speak, unless the Holy Spirit of God is pleased to give the increase. And therefore it is here said, though Christ addressed the churches, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what *the Spirit* saith unto the churches:" teaching us that the Spirit is to take Christ's word to the church, and bring home that word to two individual members of that church. And when the Spirit enables us to profit by what we hear, what does he do? He does not alter the text of the Bible, but he changes the heart of the reader. The Spirit does not throw new light upon the passage of the Bible, but he throws new light into the heart, the understanding, and the conscience of the reader. He takes those truths which enter at one ear, and are sent forth at the opposite, without leaving the least impression, and makes them strike deep into the heart, like a barbed arrow, which can only be withdrawn by the hand that was nailed to the cross, and that benevolently and lovingly planted it there. Hence we see the difference between a man who reads the Bible in the light of carnal wisdom, and another man who reads the Bible in the light of the Holy Spirit. One man believes it, and would subscribe to it as a creed; the other man believes it, and feels it, and subjects his soul to it as to a regenerative power. One man has light enough to lead him to acquiesce in and to admire it; but the other man has light that makes him accept the influence of the Bible in his walk, his conversation, and deportment in the world. The man who is not taught by the Holy Spirit admits the Bible and Christianity as a cold but beautiful theory; the other admits it to influence his heart as a living element of power. The one subordinates the Bible to suit his own aim and end; the other is subordinated by the Bible to feel its great and holy purposes. The natural man makes use of the Bible to do what he wishes; the regenerate man is subjected and converted by the Bible to do what God would have him to do.

One runs after the preacher, seeking to be regaled by his eloquence; the other comes to the minister thirsting for God, the living God. The one changes his place of worship in order to come under a new excitement; the other prays for the Spirit of God to come down upon the old place and the old ministration, in order that a real and living excitement may take place in his heart. The one has "ears to hear," and itching ones too; the other has a heart to feel, and therefore the Gospel to him is not in word only, but in power.

I have thus told you the grounds upon which you are to listen; I have also explained how you are to listen; and lastly, the necessity of the Holy Spirit to teach you.

How many practical lessons have we gathered from the consideration of these seven beautiful epistles! How many precious truths, like pearls, have we picked up by the way! How many sweet sounds of heavenly music have we heard! This is certain of all, that great responsibilities have been incurred. Another year is drawing to its close; the epochs, the scenes, the transactions, the perils of which we dimly guessed at its commencement, and have painfully, and some *personally* witnessed at its close. What the next year may be, it is not for me to state; but all seems blackening still. There is not a throne in Europe that is not placed upon a volcano: there is not a population in Europe that has not its sword half out of its sheath. There is not a piece of ground safe, I solemnly believe, for man's foot or for man's heart—for monarch's throne or for commoner's home—until that sunshine bursts upon the world which ushers in the Sun of Righteousness himself, and the New Jerusalem cometh down from heaven prepared as a bride for the bridegroom.

I purpose, on future Sabbath evenings, as soon as I have sufficiently prepared the materials myself, to show you how the prophecies contained in Daniel go to confirm those that are contained in the Apocalypse; how both contain illustrations of the same great practical truths, and both point to the same blessed and glorious issues. In discoursing on this book, the Apocalypse, I have said little, I hope, that is rash; nothing, I hope, that is purely speculative: where God is silent, my guess and conjecture

have been faint; where God has clearly spoken, I trust the trumpet has given no uncertain sound. The effect of these studies upon me has been that my heart is more subdued and my grasp of the world is more and more relaxed; my feeling and living as a stranger, and a sojourner, and a pilgrim, is increased. These thoughts have not saddened me, but they have sanctified me; they have not made me more melancholy, because I stand upon that which is soon to lie a wreck: on the contrary, they have made me feel more hopeful, more joyous, because my redemption draweth nigh; and, instead of making me relax in duty toward those that are without, I feel that the day is rapidly drawing to its close, and great dark shadows, like the birds of night, are coming up and gathering on the horizon, and overspreading and darkening it with their wings; and whilst the little light remains, let us do our work more strenuously before the night cometh, when no man can work. As far as you are concerned, I am sure these truths have been sweetened and sanctified to you; you have been more liberal—liberal beyond measure—so much so, that our treasurer was telling me, only the other day, that during the last six months he has received from you, for different purposes of religion and charity, external to ourselves, above 600*l*. The amount of your contributions, for the good of others and for the promotion of the Gospel, certainly indicates that your hearts have been touched, and your hands are therefore open. God grant that you may go on even unto perfection, till we arrive at that age which many of us may live to enter; for the six-thousandth year is nearly closing; we are within twenty years of the close of the sixth millenary from the creation of the world. When these twenty years have expired, it is more than probable the great Sabbatical year will begin—"the rest that remaineth for the people of God;" that bright and blessed day when all things shall become new, and on some of the promises relating to which I will address you by-and-by.

The following is the most recent description of Laodicea:—
There were five cities of this name, two in Asia Minor, two in

Syria, and another in Media; but the Scriptures speak only of that in Phrygia, near Colosse, one of the seven primitive Christian Churches. Its earliest name was Diospolis; it was afterwards called Rhoas; but Antiochus II. King of Syria, having rebuilt or enlarged and beautified it, called it Laodicea, after his wife Laodice. Strabo mentions it as being a great and important city in his time, and in the age preceding.

Laodicea was situated on the Lycus, a tributary of the Meander, one hundred and twenty miles E. S. E. of Smyrna. It was an inconsiderable place under the Syrian kings, but when it came into the possession of the Romans, they strengthened and enlarged it, so that at length, about the Christian era, it became, next to Apamea Cibolis, the largest city of Phrygia. There can be little doubt that it was visited by St. Paul in the course of his apostolic tour through Asia Minor, and probably the Christian converts of Laodicea, as well as those of Colosse and Hierapolis, both neighbouring towns, were the fruits of the Apostle's preaching. In the Epistle to the Colossians, (iv. 16,) mention is made of an epistle to the Laodiceans; and though some critics have maintained that it is identical with that to the Ephesians, the more probable conjecture is, that it has not come down to us. The persecution which raged in Asia Minor during the latter part of the first century, tended somewhat to abate the zeal of the Laodicean Christians, and hence the rebuke in the Revelation. "Laodicea," observes Dr. Chandler, "was often damaged by earthquakes, and restored by its own opulence, or by the munificence of the Roman Emperors. These resources failed, and the city, it is probable, became early a scene of ruins. About the year 1097, it was possessed by the Turks, and submitted to Ducas, general of the Emperor Alexis. In 1120, the Turks sacked some of the cities of Phrygia, but were defeated by the Emperor John Comnenus, who took Laodicea, and built anew or repaired the walls. About 1161 it was again unfortified, many of the inhabitants were then killed, with their bishop, or carried with their cattle into captivity by the Turks. In 1190 the German Emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, going by Laodicea with his army towards Syria, on a Crusade, was received so kindly

that he prayed on his knees for the prosperity of the people. About 1196, this region, with Caria, was dreadfully ravaged by the Turks. The Sultan, on the invasion of the Tartars in 1255, gave Laodicea to the Romans, but they were unable to defend it, and it soon returned to the Turks. We saw no traces of houses, churches, or mosques. All was silence and solitude. Several strings of camels passed eastward over the hills; but a fox, which we first discovered by his ears peeping over a brow, was the only inhabitant of Laodicea." The city finally came into the possession of the Turks in the beginning of the fourteenth century, since which it has been a mere ruin, "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and naked." (Rev. iii. 14—22.) Its ruins now only remain, which bear among the Turks of the neighbouring towns the name of Estribissar, or the Old Castle. There is, in fact, not one of the Seven Churches, the overthrow of which has been so severe, and the desolation of which has been so entire, as that of Laodicea. It is indeed little else than a heap of ruins; from which, however, ample evidence may be collected of the magnificence for which it was anciently celebrated. These ruins cover three or four small hills, and are of very great extent.

Its three theatres, and the immense circus, which was capable of containing upwards of thirty thousand spectators, the spacious remains of which are yet to be seen, give proof of the greatness of its ancient wealth and population, and indicate too strongly, that in that city where Christians were rebuked, without exception, for their lukewarmness, there were multitudes who were lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. There are no sights of grandeur, nor scenes of temptation around it now. Its tragedy may be briefly told. It was lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold; and therefore it was loathsome in the sight of God.

"Laodicea," says Dr. Smith, "is utterly desolated, and without any inhabitants except wolves, and jackals, and foxes. It can boast of no human inhabitants, except occasionally when wandering Turcomans pitch their tents in its spacious amphitheatre."

Colonel Leake observes, "There are few ancient cities more likely than Laodicea to preserve many curious remains of an-

tiquity beneath the surface of the soil. Its opulence, and the earthquakes to which it was subject, render it probable that valuable works of art were often there buried beneath the ruins of the public and private edifices."

"Not a single Christian," says another writer, "is said to reside at Laodicea, which is even more solitary than Ephesus. The latter city has a prospect of a rolling sea or a whitening sail to enliven its decay; the former sits in widowed loneliness. Its temples are desolate, and the stately edifices of ancient Laodicea are now peopled by wolves and jackals. The prayers of the Mohammedan mosque are the only prayers heard near the yet splendid ruins of the city, on which the prophetic denunciation seems to have been fully executed, in its utter rejection as a Church."

In all the facts recorded by travellers and historians respecting the present state of the Seven Churches of Asia, we have undesignated, but no less conclusive proof of the truth of the predictions contained in the Apocalypse. Jew and Gentile, Moslem and Christian, Arab and Tartar, pilgrim, antiquary, and historian, have gone into Asia, each to prosecute his own ends—following the bent of his own folly, fancy, or it may have been, fanaticism—and after all these have retired satisfied or disappointed, either refugees or conquerors, travellers visit these ancient scenes, some in quest of health, some out of antiquarian curiosity, others to view the remains of faded magnificence, and others to be able to write books that, by their accuracy, interest, or disclosures, shall have many purchasers; and lo! the records of historians, travellers, geographers, are found, unintentionally and unexpectedly on their part, to be simply the translation of Apocalyptic prophecies into modern historical facts. How perishing is all that man calls great! How enduring is all that God pronounces true! When one sees facts thus coming up one after another in ceaseless succession to respond to the predictions of God, one cannot help believing that these words, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches," were heard by all sorts and conditions of men, and that all rushed to Asia in order to fulfil them. But they intended no such thing; they had no desire to make actual

a single verse in the Bible. In this absence of all desire or design to illustrate or demonstrate Christianity, lies the force of their testimony, the value of their contributions. Yet all this is but a first-fruits of the harvests of heathendom, as well as of Christianity, yet to be reaped. God's glory will be exacted from many as a sacrifice by whom it will not be given as an offering. Hostile lips will yet reluctantly give utterance to these words, "Thy word is truth."

THE END.

A Truly Beautiful Book.

The Birds of the Bible.

AN ELEGANT PRESENTATION VOLUME, by the REV. H. HARBAUGH,
Author of the "Heavenly Recognition of Friends," the "Heavenly Home," &c.
Imperial Octavo, elegantly ILLUSTRATED by Twelve Designs, done in Colours.

This Work is altogether Original, and by a Popular Author. The Illustrations are entirely New, and executed in a style superior to anything of the kind heretofore attempted in this country. The Letter-press is printed on a delicately-tinted cream-coloured Paper. The Binding is done with great care, and in a superior manner; and no expense has been spared in order to make it, artistically and otherwise, the LEADING PRESENTATION VOLUME OF THE SEASON.

Elegantly bound in Turkey Morocco, Antique,	-	-	-	\$7 00
“ “ Bevelled Cloth, full gilt,	-	-	-	5 00

This is a book on which the eye reposes with genuine pleasure. In all parts of its mechanical execution it is sumptuously prepared, and highly creditable to the taste which planned and superintended its publication. Our readers are not to expect in it a scientific treatise on Bible ornithology, with the usual technical descriptions, but a series of beautifully-written sketches suggested by the mention of various birds, incidentally referred to in the sacred Scriptures. Mr. Harbaugh's talents as an agreeable and devotional writer, have been tested and approved in the former productions of his pen. His publishers have most liberally aided him in making this work acceptable, by the accompaniments of a rich and luxurious typography, and coloured engravings of various birds, which are beautifully characteristic and artistical.—*Presbyterian*.

This volume will rank among the most perfect specimens of illustrated typography and of binding which has issued from the American press. In a literary point of view we think it stands foremost among Mr. Harbaugh's works. There is a mingled vein of piety and poetry running through the whole of it that brings it closely home to the heart as well as the taste.—*Episcopal Recorder*.

This is truly an elegant book. The paper, typography, and illustrations, are all of the best quality; and the contents are in admirable keeping with the externals of the book. Rarely indeed is so much of the useful and instructive found combined with so much that is attractive and beautiful.—*Traveller*.

The conception of this book is, we believe, as original as it is beautiful. The various birds mentioned in Scripture are accurately described, and each is presented, not only as a witness to the divine wisdom and goodness, but as a preacher of the most important truths. The work is suited, not less to enlarge one's knowledge of the kingdom of nature, than to increase one's admiration and reverence for the Lord of the creation. The spirit is eminently devotional: and the religious teachings not only in harmony with the sacred record, but most happily illustrative of it.—*Puritan Recorder*.

There seems to have been a successful effort on the part of the author, artist, and publishers, to produce a book at once beautiful in its subjects and in its language: artistic in its numerous illustrations, and almost faultless in its typography and binding.—*Pres. of the West*.

PROCTOR'S HISTORY OF THE CRUSADES.

With 154 Illustrations.

HISTORY OF THE CRUSADES,

THEIR RISE, PROGRESS, AND RESULTS. By MAJOR PROCTOR, of the
Royal Military Academy.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I. THE FIRST CRUSADE.—Causes of the Crusades—Preaching of the First Crusade—Peter the Hermit—The Crusade undertaken by the People—The Crusade undertaken by the Kings and Nobles—The First Crusaders at Constantinople—The Siege of Nice—Defeat of the Turks—Seizure of Edessa—Siege and Capture of Antioch by the Crusaders—Defence of Antioch by the Crusaders—Siege and Capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders.

CHAPTER II. THE SECOND CRUSADE.—State of the Latin Kingdom—Origin of the Orders of Religious Chivalry—Fall of Edessa—Preaching of the Second Crusade—Louis VII. and Conrad III. in Palestine.

CHAPTER III. THE THIRD CRUSADE.—The Rise of Saladin—Battle of Tiberias, and Fall of Jerusalem—The Germans undertake the Crusade—Richard Cœur de Lion in Palestine.

CHAPTER IV. THE FOURTH CRUSADE.—The French, Germans, and Italians unite in the Crusade—Affairs of the Eastern Empire—Expedition against Constantinople—Second Siege of Constantinople.

CHAPTER V. THE LAST FOUR CRUSADES.—History of the Latin Empire of the East—The Fifth Crusade—The Sixth Crusade—The Seventh Crusade—The Eighth Crusade.

CHAPTER VI.—CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRUSADES.

At the present time, when a misunderstanding concerning the Holy Places at Jerusalem has given rise to a war involving four of the great Powers of Europe, the mind naturally reverts to the period when nearly all the military powers of Europe made a descent on Palestine for the recovery of them from the possession of the infidels. It would seem that the interest in these places is still alive; and the history of the Holy Wars in Palestine during a considerable portion of the Middle Ages, may be supposed to form an attractive theme for the general reader.

Under this impression Major Proctor's excellent "History of the Crusades" has been carefully revised, some additions made, a series of illustrative engravings, executed by first-rate artists, introduced, and the edition is now respectfully submitted to the public.

The editor, in the performance of his duty, has been struck with the masterly, clear, and lucid method in which the author has executed the work—a work of considerable difficulty, when we consider the long period and the multiplicity of important events embraced in the history; nor has the editor been less impressed with the vigorous style, and the happy power of giving vividness, colour, and thrilling interest to the events which he narrates, so conspicuous in Major Proctor's history. No other historian of the Crusades has succeeded in comprising so complete and entertaining a narrative in so reasonable a compass.

A Handsome Octavo Volume, bound in Cloth, with appropriate Designs, \$2 25

" " " elegantly gilt, - - - - 3 00

LINDSAY & BLAKISTON'S PUBLICATIONS.

AN ILLUSTRATED LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER,

THE GREAT GERMAN REFORMER. With a Sketch of the Reformation in Germany.

Edited, with an Introduction, by the REV. THEOPHILUS STORK, D.D., late Pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Philadelphia. Beautifully ILLUSTRATED by sixteen designs, printed on fine paper. A handsome octavo volume.

Price, in cloth, gilt backs,	-	-	-	-	-	\$2 00
.. .. full gilt,	-	-	-	-	-	2 50
.. In embossed leather, marble edges, gilt backs, &c.,						2 25

The world owes much to Luther, and the Reformation of which he was the prominent leader, and nothing, save the pure, simple word of God, will do more towards securing the prevalence and perpetuating the influence of the principles of religious liberty for which he and the other Reformers contended, than the circulation of a book in which the mental processes by which he arrived at his conclusions, are set forth. We can safely recommend this book as one that is worthy of a place in every dwelling, and we hope its circulation may be as wide as its merits are deserving.—*Evangelical Magazine*.

THE LIFE OF PHILIP MELANCHTHON,

THE FRIEND AND COMPANION OF LUTHER, According to his Inner and Outer Life.

Translated from the German of Charles Frederick Ledderhose, by the REV. G. F. KROTEL, Pastor of the Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster, Pa. With a PORTRAIT of Melanchthon. In one Volume, 12mo. Price \$1 00.

THE PARABLES OF FRED'K ADOLPHUS KRUMMACHER.

From the seventh German edition. Elegantly ILLUSTRATED by Twenty-six Original Designs, beautifully printed on fine paper. A handsome demy octavo volume.

Elegantly bound in cloth, gilt backs,	-	-	-	Price \$1 75
.. .. full gilt sides, backs and edges,				2 50
.. .. Turkey morocco, antique,	-			4 00

The simple and Christian parables of Krummacher, chiefly the productions of his younger years, have acquired a wide popularity, and have long afforded a fund on which our periodicals have freely drawn. In their collected form they have passed through various editions in Germany, but we doubt whether any of them have been so tasteful and beautiful in all their appliances as the one before us. The typography is very chaste, and the illustrations neat and appropriate.—*Presbyterian*.

THE CHRISTIAN'S DAILY DELIGHT.

A SACRED GARLAND, CULLED FROM ENGLISH AND 'AMERICAN POETS. Beautifully ILLUSTRATED by Eight Engravings on Steel.

In one volume, demy, octavo, cloth, gilt backs,	-	Price \$1 50
.. .. full gilt sides, backs and edges,		2 25

In this attractive volume we find much to please the eye; but the most valuable recommendation of the work is found in the lessons of piety, virtue, morality, and mercy, which are thrown together in this many-coloured garland of poetic flowers.—*Episcopal Recorder*.

LINDSAY & BLAKISTON'S PUBLICATIONS.

WATSON'S NEW DICTIONARY of POETICAL QUOTATIONS,

Containing Elegant Extracts on every Subject. Compiled from various sources, and arranged appropriately, by JOHN T. WATSON, M. D.

We view it as a casket filled with the most precious gems of learning and fancy, and so arranged as to fascinate, at a glance, the delicate eye of taste. By referring to the index, which is arranged in alphabetical order, you can find, in a moment, the *best ideas* of the most inspired poets of this country as well as Europe, upon any desired subject.—*Chronicle*.

WELD'S SACRED POETICAL QUOTATIONS;

OR, SCRIPTURE THEMES AND THOUGHTS, as Paraphrased by the Poets.

Selected and arranged by the REV. H. HASTINGS WELD.

The design was an equally happy and original one, that of collecting the fine moral and religious passages of the poets which are paraphrases of the Scriptures; and the execution of it has obviously involved much labour, as it required the good taste and critical judgment which no one was better qualified than Mr. Weld to bring to the task.—*North American*.

MISS MAY'S AMERICAN FEMALE POETS.

With Biographical and Critical Notices, and Selections from their Writings.

We regard this volume as a proud monument of the genius and cultivation of American women, and we heartily commend it to all our female readers as eminently worthy of their attention.—*Louisville Journal*.

DR. BETHUNE'S BRITISH FEMALE POETS.

With Biographical and Critical Notices, and Selections from their Writings.

As a treasury of nearly all the best pieces from their pens, and as a manifestation of female talent, of woman's imaginative and sensitive excellence, and the influence they exercise over social manners, it is a valuable contribution to English literature. The poems are selected with much judgment and good taste.—*Ledger*.

OCTAVO EDITIONS OF EACH OF THE ABOVE FOR PRESENTATION,

BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED

Bound in Library Style, Marble Edges,	-	-	-	Price \$2 00
“ Cloth, full gilt, bevelled boards,	-	-	-	3 00
“ Turkey Morocco, full gilt,	-	-	-	4 00
“ “ “ Antique,	-	-	-	4 50
Also, 12mo. editions of each, in Cloth, gilt backs,	-	-	-	1 25
“ “ “ “ full gilt,	-	-	-	1 50

LINDSAY & BLAKISTON'S PUBLICATIONS.

THE SEPULCHRES OF OUR DEPARTED.

BY THE REV. F. R. ANSPACH, A.M.

"As flowers which night, when day is o'er, perfume,
Breathes the sweet memory from a good man's tomb."

Sir E. L. Bulwer.

Third Edition. In one Vol., 12mo. Price \$1. Cloth, gilt. \$1 50.

This is a volume to comfort and to cheer ; to render the grave familiar, and to derive from its contemplation the most encouraging hopes. A fine tone pervades the volume, and it abounds in just sentiments ornately expressed. We should be glad to see that general seriousness of feeling which would make such a volume popular.—*Presbyterian.*

All Christians who are looking forward to the bliss of heaven, by passing through the tomb, will be strengthened and comforted by glancing over the lessons here inculcated as addressed to the pilgrim in search of that better country.—*Christian Chronicle.*

THE CHILDREN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A Beautiful Presentation Volume. By the REV. THEOPHILUS STORK, D.D.,
Pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Philadelphia.

12mo., Cloth, 75 Cents ; in full gilt, \$1 00.

"How oft, heart-sick and sore,
I've wished I were once more
A little child."—*Mrs. Southey.*

The general contents, the devotional and lovely spirit that pervades it, the flowing, lucid, and rich diction, the sound sentiments, the encouragements to parents to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord, the abounding consolations for those who in God's providence have been called to yield up their little ones to Him who gave them, these and other characteristics, render this book one of the most interesting and valuable of the kind that has for a long time been presented to the public.—*Lutheran Observer.*

STRUGGLES FOR LIFE, An Autobiography.

In One Vol., 12mo. Price \$1 00.

What Sunny and Shady Side are, as descriptive of American Pastoral Life, this delightful volume is as descriptive of the Life of an English pastor. It describes, in a most felicitous style, his labours, trials, sorrows, pleasures, and joys. But, perhaps, its chief value consists in the vivid views it gives of human nature as illustrated in the leading characteristics of English society, manners, and customs.—*Spectator.*

THE POETICAL WORKS OF JAMES MONTGOMERY.

The only complete edition ; collected and prepared by him just prior to his death.

With a PORTRAIT. One Volume, octavo.

Price, in Library style, \$2 00 ; Cloth, full gilt, \$3 00 ; Turkey Morocco, \$4 00.

The poetry of the Sheffield bard has an established reputation among serious readers of every class. The spirit of the humble Christian and the pure Philanthropist, breathes through it all ; and few will rise from the perusal of Mr. Montgomery's poems without feeling the elevating power of his chaste and beautiful lines. We are glad to see such a favourite poet in such graceful attire. The type paper, and entire "getting up" of this volume, is in tasteful accordance with the precious gems it contains, and reflects great credit on the publishers.—*Recorder.*

LINDSAY & BLAKISTON'S PUBLICATIONS.

Rev. Mr. Harbaugh's Popular Works.

LINDSAY & BLAKISTON, PHILADELPHIA,

Publish the following Series of Books, which have received the approbation of all Religious Denominations:

HEAVEN,

OR, AN EARNEST AND SCRIPTURAL INQUIRY INTO THE ABODE OF THE SAINTED DEAD.

BY THE REV. H. HARBAUGH.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH, LANCASTER, PA.

In One Volume, 12mo. Price 75 Cents.

THE HEAVENLY RECOGNITION,

OR AN EARNEST AND SCRIPTURAL DISCUSSION OF THE QUESTION,

Will we Know our Friends in Heaven?

BY REV. H. HARBAUGH.

In One Volume, 12mo. Price 75 Cents.

THE HEAVENLY HOME;

OR,

THE EMPLOYMENT AND ENJOYMENTS OF THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN.

BY THE REV. H. HARBAUGH,

AUTHOR OF "THE HEAVENLY RECOGNITION OF FRIENDS," AND "HEAVEN;
OR, THE SAINTED DEAD."

In One Volume, 12mo. Price \$1 00.

HARBAUGH'S FUTURE LIFE;

CONTAINING

HEAVEN, OR, THE SAINTED DEAD,

THE HEAVENLY RECOGNITION,

THE HEAVENLY HOME.

THREE VOLUMES, NEATLY BOUND IN CLOTH. WITH GILT BACKS, AND A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR. PRICE \$2 50.

 Copies of the above Books, handsomely bound for presentation, in cloth, full gilt. Price of the first and second volumes, \$1 25 each; of the third \$1 50.

LINDSAY & BLAKISTON'S PUBLICATIONS.

MRS. LEE'S YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIBRARY.

THE AFRICAN CRUSOES;

Or, the ADVENTURES OF CARLOS AND ANTONIO in the Wilds of Africa.
With ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE AUSTRALIAN WANDERERS;

Or, the ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN SPENCER, HIS HORSE AND DOG,
In the Bush and Wilds of Australia. With ILLUSTRATIONS.

ANECDOTES of the HABITS and INSTINCTS of ANIMALS.

With ILLUSTRATIONS.

**ANECDOTES of the HABITS and INSTINCTS of BIRDS,
FISHES, and REPTILES.**

With ILLUSTRATIONS. Each volume neatly bound in cloth, gilt backs, and sold
separately at 75 cents; or neatly put in a box together, price \$3 00.

**MARY HOWITT'S BEAUTIFUL JUVENILES,
ELEGANTLY ILLUSTRATED.**

MIDSUMMER FLOWERS,

FOR THE YOUNG. By MARY HOWITT. With Ten beautiful ILLUSTRATIONS.
Price, bound in cloth, gilt backs, 75 cents. In full gilt edges, &c., \$1 00.

THE DIAL OF LOVE,

A CHRISTMAS BOOK FOR THE YOUNG. By MARY HOWITT. Ten beautiful ILLUSTRATIONS. Price, bound in cloth, gilt backs, 75 cents; in full cloth, gilt edges, &c., \$1 00.

MY NEIGHBOR'S CHILDREN.

From the German. By MRS. SARAH A. MYERS. In 2 volumes, 16mo. With ILLUSTRATIONS. Price \$1 25.

A sprightly and very effective tale. It preaches a kind of domestic gospel which every parent will see the beauty of, and perhaps feel the force of. Its impression is both decided and good.—*Evangelist*.

LINDSAY & BLAKISTON'S PUBLICATIONS.

A BEAUTIFUL ROMANCE.

The high moral tone and pure sentiment which pervade the whole composition, is the more striking from its contrast with the depraved taste and corrupt influence of so many of the works of fiction of the present day.

AFRAJA; or, LIFE AND LOVE IN NORWAY.

A NORWEGIAN AND LAPLAND TALE. From the German of Theodore Mügge. Translated by EDWARD JOY MORRIS, Author of "Travels in the East," "The Turkish Empire," &c.

In full Cloth, price \$1 25; in Two Parts, Paper, price \$1 00.

"The reader, in his perusal of this beautiful work of genius, will find himself introduced to a rare and almost untrodden field of fiction—the remote neighbourhood of the North Pole, and those icy, desert steppes, where the Laplander pursues his wandering life of privation and suffering. His life-like descriptions of the manners and customs of this curious people, and the Norwegian settlers on the coasts, are drawn with such power as to awaken the keenest interest in his brilliant story, and to keep the attention of the reader intensely excited from the first to the last page. The characters are portrayed with a rare skill and fidelity to nature, and the whole composition cannot fail to augment the reputation of the author, and to place him in the front rank of German historical novelists."

The characters of the heroines of the story, Gula and Ilda, are delineated with a degree of delicacy and beauty rarely to be met with, and with a power so absorbing as to completely chain the reader's attention.

The story is truly one of "life and love" among a people almost unknown to us except by name; and the incidents of it are so new and so heart-stirring, that little as we are accustomed to yield to the delusion without which no novel can be interesting, we could hardly shake off the fancy that every thrilling occurrence related passed under our own eye.—*National Intelligencer*.

There is an originality, simplicity and beauty about the whole which will attract and charm every reader of taste, and make it a most welcome addition to the commonwealth of fiction.—*Traveller*.

This work is destined to delight many readers. There is a dramatic as well as descriptive power in it which is illustrated in every page. A new volume in human nature is here opened to us.—*Bulletin*.

Afraja is destined to a wide and enduring popularity, and it will take a distinguished place among the highest order of classic fictions. The variety and contrast of characters invest the book with a new charm. The cold, self-sacrificing Ilda; the artless child of nature, Gula; the warm-hearted, passionate Hannah, have their counterparts in the pure, high-minded Danish Baron, Marstrand, the simple, guileless Bjornarne, and the crafty, vindictive Petersen. The cunning, avaricious traders, Helgestad and Fandrem, are confronted with the magnanimous old Lapland chief Afraja, whose mysterious character and life, reputed wealth, and fame as a necromancer, keep the imagination of the reader in a continued stretch of excitement to the last page.—*Inquirer*.







BS
2825
C 77

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Santa Barbara

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE
STAMPED BELOW.

RET'D APR 26 1989 13

DUE



3 1205 00875 5702

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 001 033 033 0

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

